# The Miraculous Preachings of the Glorious Qur'an

(**Masterpiece excerpts of preachings from Glorious Qur'an and the Lives of the Prophets**)

by

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## Note by the Translator from Arabic into Urdu

"This short collection of eight lectures on the "Method of Preaching" in the light of glorious Qur'an would open new vistas for both, the student and the specialist. Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) said, "the wonders of the glorious Qur'an would never cease." The present book is a clear proof of this Tradition when, not thousands, but hundreds of thousand books have been written during the last fourteen hundred years, the subject appears new and the verses (of the glorious Qur'an) do not seem to have lost their freshness."

The scholars know the importance of the call to the "Way of Allah" and they are aware of the two key principles of 'wisdom' and 'fair exhortation'. But few had realised that the glorious Qur'an has not left them vague but laid down broad but distinct outlines by giving the examples of preachings by the prophets (peace be on all of them). There is as such, no need for the preachers to borrow anything from outside.

This book is an important addition to the innumerable works on the glorious Qur'an and inspite of its small size it ranks as one among the earlier classic and voluminous works.

(Dr.) Abdullah Abbas Nadwi,
King Abdul Aziz University,
Makkah.

27th Jamadi-ul-Awwal,1401
3rd April, 1981.

In the Name of Allah, Most Beneficent, Most Merciful

## NOTE BY THE TRANSLATOR

"And who is better in speech than him who prayeth unto his Lord and doeth right, and saith : Lo ! I am of those who surrender."

Surah Ha Mim as-Sajdah: 33.

I have great pleasure in presenting in the following pages the English version of eight lectures delivered in **Arabic** by Maulana Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi at the conclusion of the first session of the "Faculty of 'Dawah' and Islamic Thought" in Darul Uloom Nadwat-ul-Ulama, Lucknow and translated into **Urdu** by Dr. Maulana Abdullah Abbas Nadwi.

I hope these lectures will prove very helpful to workers of Islamic 'Dawah' in English-speaking countries as they will open new vistas and give them new ideas in their work.

INDORE (INDIA)
10th Zil Hijj, 1414
22nd May, 1994

**(Qazi) Abdul Hameed**

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# INTRODUCTION

The closing days of fourteenth century Hijri proved very auspicious for Darul Uloom Nadwat-ul-Ulama as a new faculty with a two-year course was started in order to teach the Principles and Methods of Preaching. It was named the "Department of 'Dawah' and Islamic Thought." Maulana Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi delivered eight lectures(in Arabic) on the " Methods of Preaching in the glorious Qur'an" and another renowned scholar of the Muslim world Shaikh Dr. Yusuf Qarzawi spoke on "Islamic Thought" at the conclusion of the first session.

It is the speciality of Darul Uloom that it included the text of the glorious Qur'an (in the light of exegeses of old) in its curriculum. The study of the glorious Qur'an and Arabic literature are the two basic elements which can mould the mind of a student. The study of the glorious Qur'an as a dynamic book with special interest in Arabic literature is therefore absolutely necessary for imbibing the true spirit of preaching from the original source of Islam.

What are the qualifications of a preacher? What mode of address one should adopt in preaching? What is meant by 'wisdom' ( hikmat ) which is a necessary condition for preaching (as mentioned in the glorious Qur'an) ?

> "Call (the people) unto the way of thy Lord with 'wisdom' and "fair exhortation."
>
> *Surah an Nahl* : *125*

The glorious Qur'an has provided answers to all these

questions and they have been given in such a novel and cogent manner that nobody can think of a better way than that. The glorious Qur'an has reproduced the dialogues of the prophets (peace be on all of them) and demonstrated how they silenced the quibblers, the way they conveyed the glad tidings to the believers and the mode they adopted in warning the disbelievers. How they invited the people to the "way of Allah". Nobody (especially the preachers) can do justice (to the vocation) without deep study of these principles which are eternal and not bound by time and place.

I pray that Allah may bless these lectures with His approbation and make them useful for the Ulama, preachers and Muslims in general and bestow good health and long life on the lecturer. Amen !

**Mohammad Rabey Nadwi,**
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Darul Uloom Nadwat-ul-Ulama,
Lucknow.

16th Jamadi-ul-Awwal, 1401
23rd March, 1981.

## SERMON No. 1

# Different Methods of Islamic Preaching

What is the method of preaching according to the glorious Qur'an ? Or what guidance it provides to the preachers ? How the prophets (peace be on all of them) preached and what principles they applied in presenting the "call to religion" : What qualifications it lays down for preachers ? Are there any pre-ordained limits and fixed methods which a preacher has to observe and which can be learnt by a student at any school ?

The subject is very important. It is directly related with the glorious Qur'an and preaching. The importance and magnitude of the subject is further enhanced when these two profound and thought-provoking aspects come together under it.

The glorious Qur'an is a book of guidance and preaching and a book of divine laws and commandments. But preaching and guidance dominate over other subjects in it. There is no denying the importance of 'Shariah' and the commands—their greatness are an admitted fact—but it is a question of priority (awwaliyat). Which aspect has priority over others ? If viewed from this angle, then according to me, the aspect of preaching and guidance is dominant (ghalib) over laws and commands and 'Shariah' in the glorious Qur'an. It

is because the foundation of faith (iman) is guidance (hidayat) and 'to believe' depends on preaching.

**The Job of Preaching is Not Bound by Rules and Regulations :**

What principles have been laid down by the glorious Qur'an for preaching ? Does it lays down fixed and inflexible rules for preaching ?

I think the method of preaching has not been described in the language of law nor was it expedient to do so. The mode of preaching depends on the prevailing conditions, the people addressed and so on.

These conditions change with time and place. The art of preaching therefore, needs ready-wit and presence of mind. Besides, the preacher must have a deep understanding of human psychology and weak points of the society. It cannot be said with finality that a preacher should do something and desist from another. He should adopt such a method and present his 'call' (dawah) in a particular manner. The preacher has to face different conditions in a society and different conditions in different societies.

He would not, therefore, be bound by fixed rules and regulations. The Arabs have been gifted with a unique capacity to learn from past experiences. An Arab scholar has said :

> "If you have to send an emissary somewhere then select a wise and learned person and do not advise him too much. He will use his intellect as the situation demands and it would be perfectly in accordance with what you intended."

**The Limitations of Preaching :**

The job of preaching (religion) is very delicate and wide in scope. It has, however, certain limitations. If viewed from the stand-point of time it started when the first Messe-

nger of Allah (peace be on him) initiated preaching (amongst his people) and it will continue to the end of time. Likewise it is not confined to any particular place. It is worldwide. But it is just possible that a preacher working in East may be required to work in West or vice versa. If he is adept in preaching to the people in the East, he may not be able to do full justice to his mission in the West. Or if he understands the psychology of the people of a particular place his knowledge may not be of any use to him or bring about the same results at another place.

## A Miraculous Verse Regarding Preaching

It is a living miracle of the glorious Qur'an that it has not set limits for (the method of) preaching. It has left it to the discretion and better judgment of the preacher. The decision as to when and where a paricular method is to be applied is to be determined by religious ardour and the genius of the preacher. The fervour of religious consciousness which dominates the personality of the preacher would guide him to the appropriate method of preaching in a particular situation. The glorious Qur'an has, however, set certain limits within which the job of preaching has to be confined.

> "Call unto the way of thy Lord with 'wisdom' and 'fair exhortation', and reason with them in the better way. Lo ! thy Lord is Best Aware of him who strayeth from His way, and He is Best Aware of those who go aright."

*Surah an-Nahl* : *125*

The two aspects of preaching are clear from the above verse—how much freedom a preacher enjoys and where it comes to an end. How far he can go and where he should stop. So far, as the wide scope of preaching and the freedom of the preacher are concerned, they are apparent from the words:

"Call unto the way of thy Lord".

The verse does not ask the preacher to call the people towards faith (iman) true beliefs, prayers, good morals or call upon the people to respect human rights. No such thing has been mentioned in particular since all these aspects are covered in the phrase "unto the way of thy Lord."

These words open new horizons of thought and action for they are not limited (in meaning and concept). They cover other revealed religions, human needs—present and furture-in short everything that needs to be preached. The word 'call' has a very wide implication. It is not binding that the 'call' be made through spoken words or writings or sermons. It covers all these methods of preaching. A preacher can utilize this advice in performing his duties—sermon, speech or writings as required in a given situation. He can adopt other methods of propagation also—in fact all those means which are permissible and effective. Then it has been said "unto the way of thy Lord." No interpretation of these words is possible except those mentioned above. The words are profound and comprehensive. The words 'hikmat' and 'mau'izat' and 'hasana' used in the glorious Qur'an are full of meanings. It is not easy to translate them in any other language. The glorious Qur'an sets certain limits but gives complete freedom to the preacher to work within those limits. The verse is brief, but not ambiguous ; it is clear and lucid.

> "Call unto the way of thy Lord with wisdom and fair exhortation."
>
> *Surah an-Nahl : 125*

This verse was revealed in the context of the mission of Prophet Abraham (peace be on him)—the greatest preacher prior to the advent of Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him):

> "Lo! Abraham was a 'nation' obedient to Allah, by nature upright, and he was not of the idolaters ; Thankful for His bounties; He chose him and He

guided him unto a straight path. And We gave him good in the world and in the Hereafter he is among the righteous. And afterwards We inspired thee (Muhammad, saying): Follow the religion of Abraham as one by nature upright. He was not of the idolaters."

*Surah an-Nahl* : *120-123*

Then it goes to say :

"Call unto the way of thy Lord !"

The verse is, therefore, linked with the preaching of 'tauhid' by prophet Abraham (peace be on him). It indicates the relationship between the personality of Prophet Abraham (peace be on him) and his preachings of Truth (Haqq). It also proves that his method was the perfect example of preaching and which reflected the twin principles of "wisdom and fair exhortation."[1]

The glorious Qur'an has adopted the method of citing examples of preachings and give a detailed narration thereof. This method is obviously more effective and convincing. It is also more useful in obtaining the desired results. If the glorious Qur'an has not prescribed hard and fast rules for preaching, it has on the other hand filled the gap (if it can be called a gap) by the life-sketches, sermons, discourses and preachings of the prophets (peace be on all of them). These specimen are very effective in creating a clear impresssion and casting a miraculous effect on the mind of the reader because the impact created by these examples of gifted preachers could not have been achieved otherwise. The philosophical, psychological and other methods (e. g., the declaimers) have not proved successful in the preaching of religion. All the revealed books have become masterpiece of classic literature by virtue of their alluring diction in describing the practical examples of those who propagated their message.

These specimen are derived mostly from the lives of four selected prophets (peace be on all of them). *These* great Messengers of Allah are Abraham, Joseph, Moses and Muhammad (peace be on all of them) who portray perfect examples of preaching by a Muslim.

The important point which the glorious Qur'an has not left untouched is that it has not confined itself to the preachings of the prophets (pace be on all of them) alone. If it had been so, the common man would have thought that he stands nowhere in comparison to the prophets (peace be on all of them). They were the chosen ones and blessed with prophethood and guided by revelations. They were also assisted by Angel Gabriel. How could a common man imitate the prophets (peace be on all of them) ? It is not possible for him to fill their shoes.

The glorious Qur'an has, therefore, cited an example of preaching by a person who was not a prophet nor one who had enjoyed the company of a prophet for long. He was a Muslim belonging to the family of Pharaoh. The glorious Qur'an has mentioned just this much :

> "And a believing man of Pharaoh's family, who hid his faith."

*Surah al-Mu'min* : *28*

The circumstances in which he was living did not allow him to dislose his faith. He could not announce his creed like Syedna Abu Bakr Siddiq, Umar Farooq or Abu Zarr (Allah be pleased with them) however staunch he might have been in his faith. But he was a true Muslim. He did not fight against his brethren and acquaintances still he discharged his duty as a friend and a well-wisher. There is a good example for a man of understanding and intelligence in this narration. If a person is placed in similar circumstances or if it be not so, still he can infer from his talks the mode of presentation to acquaint others with Truth. The good news of a better reward to those

who strive in the way of Allah over those do not, has been given in the glorious Qur'an in the following verse :

> "Those of the believers who sit still, other than those who have a (disabling) hurt, are not on an equality with those who strive in the way of Allah with their wealth and lives. Allah hath conferred on those who strive with their wealth and lives a rank above the sedentary——.
>
> *Surah an-Nisa* : *95*

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SERMON No. 2

# Two Examples of Preaching by Prophet Abraham

**(peace be on him).**

One is when he presented the Truth (Haqq) to his father and the other when he addressed his people. There is a marked difference between the two. The difference is not in the mode of discourse and presentation, but it shows deep knowledge of the prevailing conditions and psychology of the people and how such preaching appeals to the heart ?

**The Son Invites His Father to Islam :**

> "And make mention (O Muhammad) in the Scripture of Abraham. Lo ! he was a saint, a prophet. When he said unto his father : "O my father ! Why worshippest thou that which heareth not nor seeth, nor can in aught avail thee ? O my father ! Lo ! there hath come unto me of knowledge that which came not unto thee. So follow me, and I will lead thee on a right path. O [my father ! Serve not the devil. Lo ! the devil is a rebel unto the Beneficent.] O my father ! Lo ! I fear lest a punishment from the Beneficent overtake thee so that thou become a comrade of the devil."
>
> *Surah Maryam: 41-45.*

The paternal affection has been aroused in these verses.

Think over the repeated address : "O my father ! It shows obedience, love and humility. It requires an aesthetic taste to realise the elegance of this address. The fact is that those who have a deep knowledge of the language of the glorious Qur'an, can really enjoy the true spirit of this mode of address. It is said that when such persons recite the verse which delineates the chastisement of Allah, they shiver with fear and tears fill their eyes. When however, they recite any verse regarding Allah's Pardon and Mercy, their hearts melt and the voice shows mildness and warmth of gratitude. When a son addresses his father thus : "O my father", he arouses his paternal affection. If he had said the same thing with the pride of a preacher, he would have said, Exalted Sir ! hear me, or O reverend priest ! think over it. It would have then given him a different impression. But he said :" O my father." He adopted this mode of address intentionally so that his preaching may touch the sympathetic chord and arouse paternal affection, and thus open the way to his heart. When a son addresses his father in this manner, however, angry the father may be, his heart melts and he is inclined to hear what the son has to say. Prophet Abraham (peace be on him) tugged at heart strings of his father before he preached. Because it is seen that sometimes affection finds a place in the heart before faith finds acceptance with the person addressed. It is also possible that a father may be affectionate but may not be a believer. If he is to be invited to (true) faith then one has to enter through the door which is open. A preacher who is blessed with 'wisdom' (hikmat) cannot lose sight of this aspect. If he does so, it may be harmful to him and his cause. If, however, a preacher is sour-tempered he cannot succeed (in his mission).

> "............for if thou (O Muhammad) hadst been stern and fierce of heart they (the companions) would have dispersed from round about thee."
>
> *Surah Al-i-Imran : 159.*

When Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) had to speak to his uncle Abu Talib at a very critical juncture, he addressed him as "Dear uncle." It was at a time when Abu Talib was afraid of boycott by the Quraish :

> "Dear uncle ! If they place sun on my right hand and the moon on my left and ask me to abandon this mission, still I would not give it up. I would continue to work for it till Allah makes it prevail or I sacrifice my life for it."

The result of these soft-spoken words was that the natural emotion of sympathy and affection was aroused and though Abu Talib remained attached to his ancestral religion, he said: "O my son ! You continue with your mission and do what you like, I would not hand you over to anybody."

**Prophet Abraham's Call to His Father.**

While speaking to his father, Prophet Abraham (peace be on him) did not employ logic nor spoke in a high-flown language meant for the intelligentsia. He initiated his talk in a language used in common parlance which could be understood by any man with commonsense. He said, "O my father ! why worship an idol which does not hear, see or could be of any help to you. I have been revealed the Truth of which you have no knowledge." It is also a matter of pride for a father that his son should excel him in knowledge and intelligence. It is not surprising also. It has sometimes happened that the father is illiterate and the son becomes a learned and proficient person. Prophet Abraham (peace be on him) said to his father, "O my father ! I have been revealed the Truth of which you have no knowledge, so follow me. I will guide you to the right path. O my father ! Do not worship the devil ! The devil is disobedient to Allah." Each and every word in this presentation has depth of meaning in it and is a treasure of wisdom. He spoke to him in a simple language because his father was simple-minded sculptor. It was no use talking to

him in a sophisticated way. He just said : "That the devil is a rebel and I fear that you may not be taken as a follower of the devil and the chastisement of Allah may strike you."

**Prophet Abraham Invites His People to Islam:**

The way Prophet Abraham (peace be on him) invited his people to Islam is entirely different from the way he invited his father,

> "Recite unto them the story of Abraham when he said unto his father and his folk : "What worship ye.' They said : "We worship idols, and are ever devoted to them." He said : "Do they hear you when ye cry ? or do they benefit or harm you ?"

*Surah ash-Shuara* : *69-73*

Do think over these verses and the sagacity and far-sightedness with which Prophet Abraham (peace be on him) preached to his people. He did not speak ill of their idols. If he had done so they would not have given ears to him. He did not say anything of his own but forced them to admit.

> "..........——..........we worship idols and are devoted unto them." He said. "Do they hear you when ye cry ? Or do they benefit or harm you ?"

*Surah Ash Shu'ara* : 71-73

Prophet Abraham (peace be on him) did not employ logic or philosophise with them. He put a simple question that when ye call them, do they hear you and benefit or harm you ? It is because man requires something to fall back upon when in distress. When a person is called by anybody he may hear him. The caller has a hope of some benefit or fears some harm from the person addressed. These are the two links with which human life is never unshackled-to the hope gain or fear of loss, in fact the entire life revolves round these two human emotions. They said : 'it is not that they benefit or harm us, but

"..................................We found our fathers acting on this wise."

*Surah ash-Shu'ara : 74*

It was what Prophet Abraham (peace be on him) wanted them to come out with. They had no answer and they admitted their ignorance and helplessness. What relation these self-sculptured idols had with human life and what they could do for human beings when they were themselves helpless ? Is there any truth based on logic and knowledge behind them (their existence) ?

Read these verses again and again and you will feel that a world of meaning lies hidden in them. One interpretation leads to another and you will realise the difference between the two ways of preaching : one to his own father and the other to his own people. Allah had granted him a deep insight into human psychology. He had the expertise to awaken the latent powers of the heart and mind. How he made his people to confess which was lying hidden at the back of their minds. Their intelligence, power of conversation and defensive capabilities were laid bare when they said :

"We found our fathers acting on this wise."

They had exhausted all their arguments and they had nothing more to add. Then he started to acquaint them with 'tauhid', Oneness of Allah.

"He said : See now that which ye worship, ye and your forefathers! Lo ! they are (all) an enemy unto me, save the Lord of the worlds, Who created me, and He doth guide me. And Who feedeth me and watereth me. And when I sicken then He healeth me. And Who causeth me to die, then giveth me life (again). And Who, I ardently hope, will forgive me my sin on the Day of Judgment."

*Surah Ash-Shu'ara : 75—82*

**Irrefutable Logic of the Glorious Qur'an :**

There is a unique and interesting point in the glorious Qur'an towards which Shaikh-ul-Islam Ibn Taimiyah has invited the attention (of his readers). He says, "when the Greek philosophers define the attributes of God (which they call Wajib-ul-Wajud or First Cause or Prime Mover in philosophical language) they give those attributes in detail which, according to them, are unbecoming of God, i.e.", He is not so or that He is free from such and such limitations." But when they speak about positive attributes then they describe them briefly (i.e., He is so and so or such and such). But against this there are details of positive attributes and brevity in the description of negative feautres in the glorious Qur'an. It is a common feature in the teachings of all the prophets (peace be on all of them) and the revealed religions which affirm positive qualities in detail and abridge the negative features. The glorious Qur'an says :

> "He is Allah, than Whom there is no other God, the Knower of the Invisible and the Visible. He is the Beneficent, the Merciful. He is Allah, than Whom there is no other God, the Sovereign Lord, the Holy One, Peace. the Keeper of Faith, the Guardian, the Majestic, the Compeller, the Superb, Glorified be Allah from all that they ascribe as partner (unto Him) ! He is Allah, the Creator, the Shaper out of naught, the Fashioner. His are the most beautiful names. All that is in the heavens and the earth glorifieth Him, and He is the Mighty, the Wise."
>
> *Surah al-Hashr* : 22-24

On the converse side the glorious Qur'an simply says :

> "Naught is as His likeness, and He is the Hearer, the Seer.
>
> *Surah Ash-Shu'ara : 11*

Ibn Taimiyah rightly says that negative qualities may be in hundreds but they do not have the same impact on the

mind as one positive attribute does. It is also a fact proved by the experience of earlier generations that human life is more dependent on positive qualities rather than on negative ones. Disclaimer of anything has very little part to play in human life and civilization.

**Vigorous Remembrance of Allah :**

When Prophet Abraham (peace be on him) heard their reply : "We worship idols and are ever devoted unto them," he retorted, "Do they hear you when ye cry ? Or do they benefit or harm you ? This is an example of abridged negation. When he spoke about the positive attributes of Allah he turned eloquent. The glorious Qur'an has reproduced his speech in these words :

> "Lo ! they are (all) enemy unto me, save the Lord of the worlds. Who created me, and He doth guide me. And Who feedeth me and watereth me. And when I sicken, then He healeth me and Who causeth me to die, then giveth me life (again). And Who, I ardently hope, will forgive me my sin on the Day of Judgment."

*Surah-ash-Shu'ara : 77-82*

Prophet Abraham has mentioned five attributes of Allah in these noble verses (creation, guidance, healing and power over death and life). But when he questioned about idols he had enquired about just two qualities ; do they hear your prayers and do they have power to benefit or harm you ? It appears that when he mentioned the name of Allah his soul was inspired and enraptured, he extolled the virtues of Allah with exultation. It is also natural that when a person likes anything, say something sweet, he wants to keep it in his mouth for a long time and relish its taste. On the other hand, if he has to take anything bitter (like medicine) he tries to swallow it in one gulp.

He, therefore, spoke with warmth and fervour about Allah. He said : "The Lord of the worlds ; He created me, guides me,

feeds me. When I fell ill, He heals me, He will make me die and resurrect me, and I hope He will forgive my sins on the Day of Judgment."

It seems he was not satisfied with it. His heart was filled with joy and a prayer gushed forth from the depth of his heart.

> My Lord ! Vouchsafe me wisdom and unite me to the righteous. And give unto me a good report in later generations. And place me among the inheritors of the Garden of Delight."

*Surah ash–Shu'ara : 83–85*

Then his thoughts turned towards his father who was the priest and leader of idolaters, for he said.

> "And abase me not on the day when they are raised, the day when wealth and sons avail not (any man). Save him who bringeth unto Allah a whole heart."

*Surah ash–Shu'ara : 87–89*

These verses make it clear why Prophet Abraham (peace be on him) was elevated to the position of the friend of Allah.

> Lo ! Abraham was a nation obedient to Allah, by nature upright, and he was not of the idolaters; thankful for His bounties; He chose him and He guided him unto a straight path. And We gave him good in the world, and in the Hereafter he is among the righteous.

*Surah an-Nahl : 120-22*

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SERMON No. 3

# The Method of Preaching by Prophet Joseph

( peace be on him )

The present sermon is yet another example of preaching discussed in the previous two sermons. We find two different methods of preaching adopted by Prophet Abraham (peace be on him)—the one when he presented Islam to his father which has been related in 'Surah Maryam' and the other when he addressed both his father and the people which has been detailed in "Surah ash Shu'ara."

I will now present the method of preaching employed by Prophet Joseph (peace be on him) . The relevant verses are as under :

> "And two young men went to prison with him. One of them said : I dreamed that I was pressing wine. The other said : I dreamed that I was carrying upon my head bread whereof the birds were eating. Announce unto us the interpretation, for we see thee of those good (at interpretation). He said : The food which ye are given (daily) shall not come unto you but I shall tell you the interpretation ere it cometh unto you. This is of that which my Lord hath taught me. Lo ! I have forsaken the religion of folk who believe not in Allah and are disbelievers in the Hereafter. And I have followed the

religion of my fathers, Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. It never was for us to attribute aught as partner to Allah. This is of the bounty of Allah unto us (the seed of Abraham) and unto mankind; but most men give not thanks. O my two fellow-prisoners ! Are divers lords better, or Allah the One, the Almighty ? Those whom ye worship beside Him are but names which ye have named, ye and your fathers. Allah hath revealed no sanction for them. The decision rests with Allah only. Who hath commanded you that ye worship none save Him. This is the right religion, but most men know not, O, my two fellow-prisoners ! As for one of you, he will pour out wine for his lord to drink ; and as for the other, he will be crucified so that the birds will eat from his head. Thus is the case judged concerning which ye did inquire."

*Surah Yusuf : 36–41*

**The Unusual Circumstances :**

Before I elucidate the importance of these noble verses I want you to visualise the unusual circumstances in which Prophet Joseph (peace be on him) had to carry out his mission. First of all think for a while who was Prophet Joseph (peace be on him). He was the son of Prophet Jacob, grandson of Prophet Isaac and great grandson of Prophet Abraham (peace be on all of them)—eminent in lineage, and prophet by heredity, noble in disposition, excellent in moral and manners, mentioned in the revealed books, narrated in religious, literary and philosophical works and matchless in beauty.

Then go through the following verses, before enjoying the literary excellence of these verses :

1) "And there came a caravan, and they sent their water-drawer. He let down his pail (in the pit)." *Surah Yusuf : 19*

2) 'And it seemed good to them (the men-folk) after they had seen the signs (of his innocence) to imprison him for a time."

*Surah Yusuf : 35*

Prophet Joseph (peace be on him) is imprisoned on a charge from which he is acquitted with honour. His innocence was as established by Allah as the wolf was free from (the guilt of) killing him.

Any way, Prophet Joseph (peace be on him) is sent to jail as a convict on a false charge, The prison staff has to carry out the orders of the higher authorities. They are not concerned with the facts of the case. They treat the inmates as chattels. They are not aware of the status of Prophet Joseph (peace be on him), the family he belongs to or the noble character he bears. The environment in prison is different from outside world and the inmates have a lot of time at their disposal.

Though all the prisoners are treated as equals, Prophet Joseph (peace be on him) becomes the centre of attention—other prisoners being impressed by his politeness and affability. The fellow-prisoners are attracted towards him on account of his devotion to prayers, dignified manners, strength of character and intelligence. They are obliged to respect him for his sterling qualities of head and heart. It was all in accordance with the Will of Allah.

The two prisoners had dreams which is not unusual, but their dreams were a bit queer. One of them dreamt that he was extracting wine (from grapes). He did not know what the dream meant and the fear caught him like a nightmare. The other man dreamt that he was carrying bread over his head and the birds were eating from it. It wasalso a strange dream. They thought to refer their dreams to Prophet Joseph (peace be on him). It shows that their instinct had not become dull. They had the faculty of observation and it is a common practice that people are guided by their own experiences rather

than depending on logic and reason. They told their dreams to Prophet Joseph (peace be on him) and asked for their interpretations saying, "we find you to be gentle and obliging."

**The meaning of word 'Ihsan' (used in the verse)**

The two prisenors who asked for interpretation of their dreams said :

> ........___for we see thee of those good
> (at interpretation)
>
> *Surah Yusuf* :

'Ihsan' thus signifies doing anything in a manner which is the highest degree of perfection.

When asked about 'Ihsan' Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) said :

> 'Ihsan' is that you worship Allah in the manner as if you are seeing Him because if you are not seeing Him, He is, undoubtedly, seeing you."

'Ihsan' here means that Prophet Joseph (peace be on him) was perfect in every way. Because he was accused of an offence (which he did not commit) there must have been some talk about it in the prison. The co-prisoners must have thought at first there must be some truth in the charge or else he would not have been in the prison. Others might have said that the charge was false. But all this loose talk ended in the prison when they saw him at close quarters and experienced his perfect manners and excellent disposition. The aura of guilt which surrounded him when he came to the prison disappeared and the prison-mates instead saw an halo of glory around him.

**A Thought-Provoking Matter :**

Prophet Joseph (peace be on him) realised that the frightful dreams had brought these prisoners to him. Since they considered such matters important in their lives. These poor fellows gave undue importance to such incidents and prognostications and placed implicit faith in them.

But Prophet Joseph (peace be on him) brought up in the lap of prophethood, was endowed with a rare insight and moulded for prophethood; he understood that these two prison-mates were forgetting the harsh realities (of the next world) and faith in Allah, the Creator and Sustainer of the universe which needed more attention than these dreams. He knew that the present life, however, long it may be, was in fact, no better than a dream. These two prison-mates were more in need to know the interpretation of the reality of life and death since their forgetfulness of Allah laid them open to more serious loss and danger. Prophet Joseph (peace be on him) who was blessed with sympathy for the people and had their welfare at heart, knew that it was more important to warn them about the real danger to come. They ought to be told about the thing which was more profitable to them, especially when they had experienced a shock and were mentally prepared to heed his advice. He had now an opportunity to tell them what he wanted or else there would be no such occasion. Prophet Joseph (peace be on him) thought it is better not to lose the chance which the interpretation of dreams had presented to him and to invite them to the religion of Allah. He thought that their natural sense of reason ought to be awakened so that they might grasp the meaning of 'tauhid',- the easy and natural belief in one Allah.

## A Nice Way to Introduce the Subject :

The nice way in which the talk was initiated needs to be understood. It has its own importance. The way a magnificent building needs a befitting gate so that the person entering it may know the grandeur of the building, Prophet Joseph (peace be on him) broached the subject in a fine and befitting manner : first he assured them that He could interpret the dreams for which they were so anxious. They had come to the right person and they had not made a mistake in coming to him.

It is natural that the person in need wants that his need should be fulfilled as early as possible. If a patient goes to a physician he wants that his disease be diagnosed and the medicine prescribed for him. If the physician dilly-dallies or refers to his books or if he says he will refer the matter to such and such person, the patient will lose heart and turn back dejected. It is, therefore, necessary that confidence should be created in the mind of the person in need. That is why Prophet Joseph (peace be on him) said to the prisoners :

> "The food which ye are given (daily) shall not come unto you but I shall tell you the interpretation ere it cometh unto you."
>
> *Surah Yusuf :37*

It was not Possible for the prisoners to stay for long with Prophet Joseph (peace be on him) and hence they needed this assurance. As I understand this verse, Prophet Joseph (peace be on him) told his prison-mates : "I would tell you the interpretation before your food is brought and you will be satisfied." "There will be no delay, and no occasion for the 'warder' to reprimand you and send you back to your cells." Egypt was a civilised country in those days and maybe the time to serve food in the prison was also fixed.

## The Mention of Something Pleasant Brings Cheers :

The mere mention of food is pleasing to the prisoners. That is why Prophet Joseph (peace be on him) created cheerfulness in their minds by first making a mention of it. They were now in a cheerful mood and inclined to hear more from him.

The prophetic temperament of Prophet Joseph (peace be on him) is note-worthy for us. He does not take any credit for interpretation of dreams and calls it to be a munificence of Allah. It is difficult to find a parallel of the intelligent way of presentation anywhere else.

"This is of that which my Lord hath taught me."
*Surah Yusuf* : 37

It is one of the subjects which has been taught to me by Allah. Thus he created an occasion to speak about the advice he wanted to give them.

Think over it. Before he interprets the dreams he very intelligently discharges the task of preaching. If he had started preaching straight away without a little digression in his talk, the prisoners would not have been in the right frame of mind to hear him because they had been frightened by their dreadful dreams. They wanted that somebody should tell them something to raise their spirits. But Prophet Joseph (peace be on him) told them that the interpretation of dreams did not depend on his own knowledge or intelligence. It was a favour bestowed by Allah. Thus he had the opportunity to preach and he did it in such a subtle manner that nobody can deny the wisdom of it.

Think over this judicious way of preaching. If Prophet Joseph (peace be on him) had said :"My friends, please wait, I will interpret the dreams. But there is another matter which is more important and worthy of serious thought." They would apparently not hear him with patience, especially on a subject with which they were not conversant. They had not gone to him to hear all those sermons.

**Turned to the Subject of Preaching in a Winsome Manner :**

"This is of that which my Lord hath taught me."
*Surah Yusuf* : 37

Now keep in mind the environment in which this 'call' had been given. If there is another example of this astute method, it is to be found in the preachings of Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) which would be mentioned later on. I do not find such a delicate situation in the long history of preachers and preachings nor do I find such a subtle

way in which the subject was introduced. Read again the verses from.

> "He aid the food which ye are given (daily) shall not come unto you but I shall tell you the interpretation One it cometh unto you. This is of that which my Lord hath taught me" *Surah Yusuf : 37*

You will see how he opened the way to sermonise on 'tauhid' Can there be any other simple and acceptable way than this ? Then look at the manner in which he broached the subject. He was in other words saying : "I do not have the ability to interpret the dreams. I am a weak and helpless person. I have been thrown in the prison and I could not prevent it. How is it possible for such a helpless person to talk about such abstruse subjects. It is the only beneficence of Allah that He has blessed him with the art of interpretation of dreams."

**Prophet Joseph (peace be on him) Covered a Long Way in a Trice:**

A question arises here. Why Allah blessed him with the knowledge of interpreting dreams ? It was one more method of inviting the attention of the people to the way of Allah. In fact Prophet Joseph (peace be on him) covered a long distance in the twinkling of an eye through his gifted insight, spiritualism and enlightened mind which the philosophers would have taken years to cover. He said :

> ............"This is of that which my Lord hath taught me. Lo! I have forsaken the religion of folk who believe not in Allah and are disbelievers in the Hereafter." *Surah Yusuf : 37*

Having said so, he thought he was in a better position to preach as though he were on the top of a mountain addressing the people down below from there :

> "O my two fellow-prisoners ! Are diverse lords better, or Allah the One, the Almighty." *Surah Yusuf : 39*

If Prophet Joseph (peace be on him) had told this earlier it would have been hard for his listeners and they would not have accepted it. But now was the opportunity to say : "O my two fellow-prisoners ! Are divers lords better or Allah, the One, the Almighty."

The priority and collaterality of the subject in the glorious Qur'an is worth consideration here. If Prophet Joseph (peace be on him) had continued the earlier talk, it would have appeared dry and lifeless. But he realised from their countenances that they were prepared to hear the celestial message. He said :

> "O my two fellow-prisoner ! Are diverse lords better or Allah the One, the Almighty ?"
>
> *Surah Yusuf : 39*

Note here the tone also. This is different from the earlier one in which he had said :

> "This is of that which my Lord hath taught me."
>
> *Surah Yusuf : 37*

The tone was then soft and mild. But the tone in which he says : "Are divers lords better or Allah the One, the "Almighty shows strength and confidence. It was the confident tone and mode of expression which they could easily understand. If Prophet Joseph (peace be on him) had employed logic and reason they would not have understood a word of it.

**A Miracle of the Glorious Qur'an :**

Then he said :

> "Those whom ye worship beside Him are but names which ye have named, ye and your fathers. Allah hath revealed no sanction for them."
>
> *Surah Yusuf : 40*

These were mere names without any substance behind them : These were just 'names' without any reality.

The Greeks have invented some names and some names have been adopted by idol worshippers. The other nations have also sculped their idol from their imagination and given them certain names. Thus came into being the mythologies of different peoples. It is the miracle of the glorious Qur'an that it has used the term 'names' for these imaginary beings which never existed. Those who have studied the history of different religions and their mythologies would appreciate the significance of these miraculous words. All mythological figures are just names coined by some people. When and where these so called gods–the rain god, war god, god of beauty, god of love etc., lived ? They never existed except in the imagination of those who created them.

Prophet Joseph (peace be on him) realised that the prison-mates were now in a receptive mood and therefore the talk need not be lengthened and the discussion on 'tauhid' not elaborated further. An expert physician knows how much medicine and nourishment is required by a particular patient. Likewise a preacher, who is divinely inspired and who has the expertise in the art of preaching knows the psychological moment when to put his message across and not to lose any time in doing so. That is the reason why the preacher who fetters his preachings by set rules and regulations makes his task difficult. Preaching needs cheerful disposition, enthusiasm and warmth. It is really tyrannical to bind a preacher with hard and fast rules.

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SERMON No. 4

# The Preachings of Prophet Moses

## ( peace be on him )

The preachings of Prophet Moses (peace be on him) were different from those which have been presented so far and which would be presented later on. They were different on three counts : the temper and position of the preacher and the people to whom the message was addressed.

The task of preaching which was entrusted to Prophet Moses (peace be on him) was a bit different though it contained the basic and central elements of the call that is, the 'way of Allah'—'tauhid', belief in the Hereafter, Resurrection and life (after death), the atrributes of Allah and invitation to believe in the Unseen. They were also different from another angle. Besides the basic subject of preaching an additional responsibility was entrusted to him. It was to rescue Bani Israel from the tyranny of Pharaoh and the miseries they were subjected to on account of their faith.

### The Mission of Prophet Moses (peace be on him) was Different :

The peculiar circumstances in which Prophet Moses (peace be on him) was born and brought up and the difficult conditions he was confronted with are the factors which go to make his mission different from other prophets (peace be on all of them). He was also entrusted with the task of telling

Pharaoh in plain words that he was a tyrant and a despot. He was oppressing Bani Israel in a ruthless manner. The Bani Israel were the descendents of the prophets (peace be on all of them) and their ancestors had alone been the true believers in Allah and 'tauhid' (Oneness of Allah). It was not a matter of any particular nation or group because such groups have always existed in the world and they can still be found. Had it been the matter of a group or clan whom a tyrant was oppressing, who had been enslaved and who were suffering on account of their beliefs, then it would have been of no special significance. This has happened at all times and we can find many such examples in every period of history. It is also not beyond the ken of imagination that such groups of people will exist in future also.

**The Different Position of Bani Israel :**

In spite of the laxity in observation of religious duties, lack of morality and certain other weaknesses Bani Israel was the only community which was then the custodian of 'tauhid; History provides evidence that in spite of their shortcoming they had all through retained their belief in Allah. This was the time when besides the Jews (Bani Israel) nobody knew anything about 'tauhid'. The exegetes of the glorious Qur'an have mentioned that this was the only reason for their superiority over other communities. They had kept the torch of 'tauhid' lighted up in the prevailing darkness of polytheism and idol worship

It was not just that Bani Israel were subjected to iniquities at the hands of Pharaoh and they were living at the mercy of a tyrant and an autocrat they were also the custodians of the belief in 'tauhid' and trustees of the legacy of prophet-hood. They were at that time the lone bearers of that trust which was the sum total of teachings of all the earlier prophets (peace be on all of them).

**The Dual Responsibility of Prophet Moses (peace be on him) :**

There was a specific difference in Prophet Moses (peace be on him) from other prophets (peace be on all of them) because he had the dual responsibility—one was to carry the message of Truth and invite the attention of Pharaoh towards Allah the One, the Almighty and to tell him that He had no partner in Sovereignty and was the Only Law-Giver. The other was to liberate Bani Israel from their serfdom

> "So go ye unto him and say : Lo! we are two messengers of thy Lord. So let the Children of Israel go with us and torment them not. We bring thee a token from thy Lord. And peace will be for him who followeth right guidance."
>
> *Surah Ta Ha : 47*

This is the aspect of preaching of Prophet Moses (peace be on him) which differentiates him from others. But his position was delicate as his life and the trials and tribulations through which he had to pass were different from other prophets (peace be on all of them).

**The Planning of Pharaoh :**

Prophet Moses (peace be on him) was born in very difficult and insufferable circumstances. Pharaoh had directed his intelligence (in today's terminology) or the Police not to leave any new-born Israelite baby alive.

> "Lo! Pharaoh exalted himself in the earth and made its people castes .A tribe among them he oppressed, killing their sons and sparing their women. Lo ! he was of those who work corruption."
>
> *Surh al-Qasas : 4*

Pharaoh had devised his plan with great care and skill-the way advanced countries formulate their plans these day. It was that no Israelite male-child be left alive. If a generation

of male-child was done away with in this manner, there would be no fear (of uprising) from Bani Israel as women-folk would be left alone and no harm would come from them. "The male-child be killed and the female-child be left alone." He issued this directive like an autocrat against which there was no appeal. But the Will of Allah was that a great personality be born among the Israelites. Pharaoh wanted to get rid of Israelites by not allowing any male-child to remain alive who could destroy his kingdom. But omnipotent Allah frustrated all his plans. Allah caused child Moses (peace be on him) to live although it was for his sake that thousands of innocent children were killed by Pharaoh. But the baby of which Pharaoh was afraid of was born and grew up. How he was saved and brought up is one of the wonders of human history. It is a miracle of the Power of Allah that he was reared in the lap of his sworn-enemy-Pharaoh.

**The Super Natural Environment :**

Keep in mind the circumstances prevailing at that time each and every aspect of which is an evidence of the working of Super-Natural Power of Allah, a fact evident from the beginning to the end.

> "And the family of Pharaoh took him up, that he might become for them an enemy and a sorrow. Lo ! Pharaoh and Haman and their hosts were ever sinning. And the wife of Pharaoh said : (He will be) a consolation for me and for thee. Kill him not. Peradventure he may be of use to us, or we may choose him for a son. And they perceived not ! And the heart of the mother of Moses became void, and she would have betrayed him if We had not fortified her heart, that she might be of the believers. And she said unto his sister : Trace him. So she observed him from afar, and they perceived not. And We had before forbidden foster mothers for him, so she said : Shall I show you a household who will rear him for you and take care of him ? So We restored him to his mother that she

might be comforted and not grieve, and that she might know that the promise of Allah is true. But most of them know not."

*Surah al-Qasas : 8-13*

Prophet Moses (peace be on him) having been brought up in the palace of Pharaoh, left it stealthliy after un-intentionelly killing a member of the Pharaoh's people.

"And he entered the city at the time of carelessness of its folk, and he found therein two men fighting, one of his own caste and the other of his enemies; and he who was of his caste asked him for help against him who was of his enemies. So Moses struck him with his fist and killed him. He said : This is of the devil's doing. Lo ! he is an enemy, a mere misleader."

*Surah al-Qasas : 15*

It was a manifest miracle and a bright and shining example of the signs of Allah that the position of a person who was chosen to preach and liberate Bani Israel, was rendered very precarious amongst them.

**The Strivings of the Powers of Faith and Heart :**

Prophet Moses (peace be on him) whose description has been given in Surah al-Qasas in detail and in some other Surah in brief, was enjoined the task of 'calling' the people to the religion of Allah, and in addition to liberate Bani-Israel. Both these tasks need a lot of patience and perseverance. The job of preaching requires hard work, immense faith and reliance on Allah and liberation of a community is not easy either. It also demands hard and long struggle. Prophet Moses (peace be on him) was a bit hesitant on account of these difficult tasks entrusted to him. The glorious Qur'an has also mentioned the mental attiude of Prophet?Moses (peace be on him) in his own words :

,'And they have a crime against me, so I fear that they will kill me.

*Surah Ash-Shu'ara : 14*

Pharaoh also reminds him of the same incident.

> "And thou didst that thy deed which thou didst, and thou wast one of the ingrates."
>
> *Surah ash-Shu'ara : 19*

This fear had created hesitancy in the mind of Prophet Moses (peace be on him). But Allah had chosen him for both these onerous tasks for there could be no better and more suitable person than him.

The glorious Qur'an has described very clearly how a messenger of Allah, a sagacious preacher aware of the complexity of the problem presents his message with dignity and zeal for the faith. Prophet Moses (peace be on him) was a true prophet and an exemplar for his entire 'ummat' : The way the prophets (peace be on all of them) preach show that they are the elects of Allah and chosen for the service of religion. Their mode of talk and the way of address is different from those professionals who become obsequious and compliant.

**The Most Beloved Person Goes to the Most Detestable :**

It is worth noting here that Allah bestows prophethood on Prophet Moses (peace be on him) and thus he became a beloved person and a true prophet. But where and to whom was he being sent ? To his enemy and the enemy of Allah. The most beloved person was being sent to the most hated man-both stood poles apart with their divergent views. We would not find anywhere else such a wide difference between two persons as we find here. The senior most messenger of his time was being sent to a person who had challenged Divine Power and the Magnificence of Allah. Pharaoh had challenged the Magnificence of Allah and he had become so audacious that he made the claim :

> And proclaimed : "I (Pharaoh) am Your Lord, the Highest"
>
> *Surah an-Naziat : 24*

Prophet Moses (peace be on him) was being sent to a person who was not only an infidel, but who had feigned godhead, who was a sinner and an accursed man and he was being advised :

> "And speak unto him a gentle word, that peradventure he may heed or fear."
>
> *Surah Ta Ha : 44*

Is there any harshness or scur note visible in this preaching ? There could be no excuse because it was difficult for anybody to outdo Pharaoh in disobedience and insolence for he said : ' I am your Lord, the Highest." But when an occasion arose to send a messenger to him, Allah had advised to use a mild tone. When Prophet Moses (peace be on him) was asked to go along with Prophet Haroon (peace be on him) to the Court of Pharaoh and declare the Truth, they said :

> "Our Lord ! Lo ! we fear that he may be beforehand with us or that he may play the tyrant."
>
> *Surah Ta Ha : 45*

Because there was a stigma attached to Prophet Moses (peace be on him) which created some weakness, Allah said to him :

> "Fear not, Lo ! I am with you twain, Hearing and Seeing. So go ye unto him and say : Lo ! we are two messengers of thy Lord. So let the Children of Israel go with us, and torment them not. We bring thee a token from thy Lord. And peace will be for him who followeth right guidance. Lo ! it hath been revealed unto us that the doom will be for him who denieth and turneth away. (Pharaoh) said : Who then is the Lord of you twain, O Moses ? He said : Our Lord is He Who gave unto everything its nature, then guided it aright."
>
> *Surah Ta Ha : 46–50*

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Allah Says : Magnificence ('azmat) is my cloak, whoever will try to wrest it I will crush him.

**A Poisonous Arrow of Pharaoh :**

The satanic mind of Pharaoh started working fast and he took out such a poisonous arrow from his quiver which never misses-an arrow if aimed at the most intelligent and experienced preacher, it would have its desired effect. The preacher may be an accomplished scholar, he might have studied the art of preaching or be an expert in psychology, sociology, or logical disputation he is certain to be hit by this arrow. Pharaoh asked :

"What then is the state of the generations of old ?"

*Surah Ta Ha* : *51*

It was an uncommon question of the devilish mind and showed perverse intelligence of Pharaoh. He wanted to arouse the sentiments of the courtiers against Prophet Moses (peace be on him) and get rid of him. He wanted to kill two birds with one stone. One : that he might side-track the call to 'tauhid' because it was ruinous for him. The faith in Allah touches the heart-strings of men and the spark of 'iman' which is lying dormant in the nature of man awakens. The courtiers were after all men; some of them must have been intelligent and, maybe, some of them were those whose conscience had not died. It was possible that the call to 'tauhid' might stir up their sense of "iman." Pharaoh, therefore, tried to evade the issue. He was mighty afraid of the belief in 'tauhid.' He, therefore, raised this question so that his courtiers may become cautious and realise that Prophet Moses (peace be on him) wanted to turn them away from the path of their forefathers. That is why he asked :

"What then is the state of the generations of old ?"

*Surah Ta Ha : 51*

There were just two alternatives for Prophet Moses (peace be on him). He would have said in plain words without any sophistication that "they were in Hell."

> "Lo ! ye (idolaters) and that which ye worship beside Allah are fuel of hell. There unto ye will come." *Surah Anbiyah : 98*

If he had said that the door for further talks would have been closed. The courtiers would have flared up and either they would have walked out or man-handled Prophet Moses (peace be on him) in a fit of rage, saying, "you are insulting our forefathers."

**The Prophetic Wisdom and a Miracle :**

The other alternative woud have been for Prophet Moses (peace be on him) to keep quiet or be politic and say that so far as their ancestors were concerned they were learned and great men and he holds them in high respect. Then Pharaoh would have reasons to say that if they were learned, great and respectable person then our beliefs are the same as were theirs.

> He '(Pharaoh) said :" what is then the state of the generations of old ? He (Moses) said ; the knowledge thereof is with my Lord in a Record. My Lord neither erreths nor forgetteths".
>
> *Surah Ta Ha : 51-52*

Prophet Moses (peace be on him) again reverted to the main subject which was under discussion earlier. It was possible that he might have said that history would provide information about them. If he had said that the topic would have changed. Pharaoh would have had the opportunity to dilate upon fictitious stories circulated as historical facts and argued on their basis. But Prophet Moses (peace be on him) gave areply of which there was no answer : He said :

> The knowledge thereof is with my Lord..................".
>
> *Surah Ta Ha : 52*

Now consider the simplicity and profundity of these words. What he wanted to say he expressed in a few words.

This is prophetic wisdom and the miracle of preaching. If we are confronted with such a situation we may find out hundred and one ways to express ourselves and try to wriggle out of a difficult situation. We can say 'It is another matter' or' I am concerned with the present times and not with the past, etc."

**Firmness in Preaching :**

Prophet Moses (peace be on him) did not digress from preaching and did not give up the initiative which was in his hands and reverted to the main subject with suddenness. We cannot imagine the speed and grace with which he turned back and took the wise step which has no parallel elsewhere. He solved the entire problem in a few words and immediately returned to the main theme, "the knowledge thereof is with my Lord in a Record. My Lord neither errs nor forgets"—This did not allow the continuity of the talks to break. He described such attributes of Allah which Pharaoh wanted to avoid and change the subject. When he recited this brief verse, his literary taste was stirred at the elegance of this charming and classic masterpiece, his soul was thrown in ecstasies and his head bowed to pay its respectful homage.

> "He (Moses) said : The knowledge thereof is with my Lord in a Record. My Lord neither erreth nor forgetteth. Who hath appointed the earth as a bed and hath threaded roads for you therein and hath sent down water from the sky and thereby We have brought forth divers kinds of vegetation. (Saying) : Eat ye and feed your cattle. Lo. ! herein verily are portents for men of thought."

*Surah Ta Ha 52-54*

**The Change in Stratagem by Pharaoh :**

We find another example of it in Surah ash Shu'ara :

> "Pharaoh said : And what is the Lord of the Worlds ? (Moses) said : Lord of the heavens and the

earth and all that is between them, if ye had but sure belief. (Pharaoh) said unto those around him : Hear ye not ? He (Moses) said : Your Lord and the Lord of your fathers. (Pharoah) said Lo : your messenger who hath been sent unto you is indeed a mad man !"

*Surah ash-Shu'ara* : 23—27

This was the strategy of Pharaoh and a clever attempt to change the course of talks. He wanted to divert the attention of his courtiers from the main topic with his gift of the gab and knowledge of human psychology (which a ruler acquires through experience) and political manoeuvring to deal with Prophet Moses (peace be on him). But Prophet Moses (peace be on him) was not prepared to budge from the main subject. Pharaoh said : What is the Lord of the worlds ? He wanted that Prophet Moses (peace be on him) might change the course of the talk and open the way for debate. But Prophet Moses (peace be on him) stressed on Pharaoh's weakest point and said : "Lord of the heavens and the earth and all that is between them if ye had but sure belief." It means that the Pharaoh's throne had no legs of its own to stand upon. But he did not say so and did confine himself to "Lord of the heavens and the earth and all that is between them "and added" if ye had but sure belief." Thus challenged him and stressed over the real malady " if ye had but sure belief." He wanted to stress that Pharaoh was devoid of "iman." He wanted to say that if he had 'faith' he would see that the Lord of the worlds is One, Who is the Lord of the heavens and the earth and all that is between them."

**The Last Arrow of Pharaoh :**

Pharaoh had just one way of stopping Prophet Moses (peace be on him) from preaching and inciting his courtiers against him. The glorious Qur'an has described it in various ways.

(Pharaoh) said unto those around him : Hear ye not ?

*Surah ash-Shu'ara* : 25

Did you not hear, what he said ? Do not you feel ashadem ? Does not your sense of honour get excited ? Do you not have the courage to rejoin on my behalf and stop him ? But before they could get excited and speak, Prophet Moses (peace be on him) completed the talk :

> "He (Moses) said : Your Lord and the Lord of your fathers."

*Surah ash-Shu'ara* : *26*

Pharaoh once again tried to laugh to scorn and said :

> "Lo : Your messenger who hath been sent unto you is indeed a mad man."

*Surah ash-Shu'ara* : *27*

Pharaoh knew this human weakness that if somebody is attacked he is enraged. He cannot swallow an insult. The glorious Qur'an graphically described the entire environment and debate in such a manner as though we see and hear it. Pharaoh thought that Prophet Moses (peace be on him) would lose temper and say : "Am I mad ? Call a physician and get me examined by an expert. This was the purpose when Pharaoh imputed madness to Prophet Moses (peace be on him) But he ignored and it continuing his talk said :

> "He (Moses) said : Lord of the East and the West and all that is between them, if ye did but undersrand."

*Surah ash-Shu'ara* : *28*

He did not say anything about his own self nor defended himself. He was the true messenger of Allah (peace be on him) and he was enjoined the task of inviting them to the religion of Allah. He was not to be carried away by personal attacks. These aspersions were immaterial in comparison to the noble task of preaching in an atmosphere where polytheism was widespread; where idol-worship was prevalent, crimes and sins were common, and where innocent children

were being killed. He therefore did not pay heed to these personal jibes and said :

> "He (Moses) said : Lord of the East and the West and all that is between them."

and added :

> "if ye did but understand"

*Surah ash-Shu'ara : 28*

This small sentence pierced Pharaoh's heart. He thought himself to be the "Lord, the Highest." He had the wrong notion that the world comprises of Egypt and because he ruled over it, he thought the whole world was under his thumb.

When Prophet Moses (peace be on him) talked about the East and the West and all that lies between them, he actually challenged Pharaoh's vainglory of sovereignty and demolished the foundation of his false godhead of which he was very proud.

This was a specimen of prophetic wisdom and preaching in which the position of the preacher and the people to whom the 'call' had been given was quite different. The subject of preaching was delicate and complicated and the position of the preacher was critical and insecure and the one to whom this 'call' was being given was an autocratic ruler. That is why this particular example of preaching deserves our special attention. We can take a lesson and get valuable guidance in formulating and preparing a practical plan for shaping our ideas of preaching.

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SERMON NO. 5

# Prophet Moses and Bani Israel :

(Peace be on him)

Domestic strife is sometimes more dangerous than external aggression. When a family or a community is involved in internecine feud it affects the heart and mind of the people and it becomes more difficult to face the dire consequences than an external aggressor. What was the stand of prophet Moses (peace be on him) in respect of his own people-the Bani Israel ?

## The Four-fold Stand of Prophet Moses (peace be on him)

It is pertinent to ask here as to what was the stand of Prophet Moses (peace be on him) as a preacher and reformer in respect of Bani Israel. The answer which the glorious Qur'an gives is that he took a four-fold stand took vis-a-vis Bani Israel. We can draw right conclusions by their study and gain knowledge of the principles of religious preaching : how we should address members of our family or community and what should be our mode of address if we have an occasion to address an enemy. It would also be clear from this study that a preacher is a preacher first and last, whether he is addressing close relations or an enemy, the idea of preaching is upper most in his mind-whatever be the conditions and whoever be the addressee. The purpose of preaching will always be before him and whatever he may speak the aim

will be how he can convince the addressee and prepare him to accept Truth. He would also not touch any such point which would jeopardise his mission.

The mission which was entrusted to Prophet Moses (peace be on him) was of a special nature because of the peculiar conditions prevailing at that time and the circum stances in which he was born and brought-up.

## The Difference Between Prophethood and Political Leadership :

There are chances of misunderstanding about the second mission of Prophet Moses (peace be on him)-to free Bani Israel. It is desirable that the readers should have a clear idea about it. The point is that whoever would have taken up this mission political considerations would have dominated his mind and he would have spoken in terms of political language. He would have been full of patriotic fervour and talked about rights and demands and argued about them. It is, no doubt, correct that Pharaoh had enslaved Bani Israel and oppressed them. It is the glorious Qur'an which has vividly described the sea of trouble in which they were placed in its matchless eloquence.

> "And (remember) when We did deliver you from Pharaoh's folk, who were afflicting you with dreadful torment, slaying your sons and sparing your women That was a tremendous trial from your Lord."
>
> *Surah al-Baqarah : 49*

> "Lo : Pharaoh exalted himself in the earth and made its people castes. A tribe among them he oppressed, killing their sons and sparing their women. Lo ! he was of those who work corruption."
>
> *Surah al-Qasas : 4*

Anybody who would have come forward to defend the people who were being victimised and tried to liberate them from the clutches of a tyrant, he would surely have been full

patriotic zeal and national pride and he would have talked about birth rights as citizens It is common knowledge that the language of rights and demands is different as are its implications.

But the point towards which I want to draw particular attention of the reader is that Prophet Moses (peace be on him) like other prophets (peace be on all of them) was a messenger with whom "Allah spake directly" (Surah an-Nisa : 164) and was first and foremost a preacher His mission was to call the people to the true religion, beliefs and faith. Think over these verses and see how Prophet Moses (peace be on him) kept up his position as a preacher, from the beginning to the end, with the guidance of Allah. He did not allow the national pride, patriotism or the will to protest (against repression and denial of rights) to interfere with his chief mission. He was in a position in which an ordinary person forgets everything and his zeal for national pride gets the upper hand and he starts speaking the language of political leaders. But the call which Prophet Moses (peace be on him) gave to Pharaoh was for belief in Allah. He explained to him the religious truths and reminded him of the dispensation of Allah in regard to former communities. The verses are :

**The Viziers of Pharaoh used a Double-edged Weapon :**

> "The chiefs of Pharaoh's people said : (O King), wilt thou suffer Moses and his people to make mischief in the land, and flout thee and thy gods ? He said : We will slay their sons and spare their women, for lo ! we are in power over them."
>
> *Surah al-A'raf* : *127*

These people wanted to kill two birds with one stone. On the one hand they wanted to incite Pharaoh and on the other the common people against Prophet Moses (peace be on him) and Bani Israel :

"Wilt thou suffer Moses and his people to make

mischief and flout thee and thy gods ?"

*Surah al-A'raf* : 127

Thus they wanted to incite Pharaoh and the people both.

**A Glorious Example of Prophetic Spirit :**

At this unexpected dangerous turn (of the debate) when a man is excited Prophet Moses (peace be on him) did not give-up his mode of address to which he was accustomed nor did he forget the message he was bound to convey.

If there were any other scholar, preacher or political leader, he would have accused Pharaoh and quarrelled with these peole, but Prophet Moses (peace be on him) addressed him own people, who were his first addressees because he expected that Allah would bring a change in their pitiable conditions through him.

**A Right-guided Preacher :**

> "And Moses said unto his people : Seek help in Allah and endure. Lo ! the earth is Allah's. He giveth it for an inheritance to whom He will. And lo ! the sequel is for those who keep their duty (unto Him)."

*Surah al-A'raf* : 128

Prophet Moses (peace be on him) said : "Seek help in Allah." He did not ask them to depend on their numerical strength or their wisdom. Bani Israel have, without doubt, always distinguished themselves in intellectual and mental faculties from others. But Prophet Moses (peace be on him) did not say any such thing with which their national pride would have bucyed up. If he wanted it he could have easily done so bescause he belonged to them. But it appears as if he was giving a sermon from the pulpit in a mosque.

This is the role of a true prophet (peace be on him) who was fairmly set on the 'straight path' and who was adept in preaching and tutored for an important mission.

It was a 'call' towards (the way of) Allah; a call to rely and entrust everything to Allah and a call to stand with courage and determination against Pharaoh's tyranny.

> "We will slay their sons and spare their women, for lo ! we are in power over them."
>
> *Surah al-A'raf 127*

This act was not a temporary measure but a general rule practised on permanent basis by Pharaoh. It showed the height of his pride. But Prophet Moses (peace be on him) said to his people :

> "Seek help in Allah and endure. Lo ! the earth is Allah's..."
>
> *Surah al-A'raf 128*

These words must have been difficult to bear for Pharaoh. It was not easy to say in his court that the land does not belong to Pharaoh or even to the Bani Israel. If Prophet Moses (peace be on him) were a political or national leaders he would have said, "The land belongs to us, we own it." This is the language which is commonly used by national leaders. During British regime in India the national leaders used to proclaim that the country does not belong to English men. But Prophet Moses (peace be on him) said in the presence of Pharaoh that the land belonged to Allah. He did not say that it belonged to his forefathers and his people inherited it. If he had said so, he would have been within his right since Bani Israel had been settled there for hundreds of years. They had all the rights like the Coptics or members of the royal family as they were the citizens of that country. But the stand of Prophet Moses (peace be on him) was altogether different. He said to his people :

> "Seek help in Allah and endure. Lo ! the earth is Allah's. He giveth it for an inheritance to whom He will."
>
> *Surah al-A'raf : 128*

It also meant that Prophet Moses (peace be on him) wanted to make it plain to his people that if Pharaoh was removed and they took his place, it will not be for an indefinite time. It was against the "ways of Allah."

> "He giveth it (the land) for an inheritance to whom He will."

The end-result is with the pious, those who fear Allah. The land does not belong to any individual or family. No nation remains in power for all times. It is the Truth that ultimately triumphs.

> "Then We appointed you viceroys in the earth after them, that We might see how ye behave."
>
> *Surah Yunus : 14*

**Discouraging and Heart-rending Imputation :**

The charge which might have hurt Prophet Moses (peace be on him) the most would have been the imputation made by Bani Israel :

> "We suffered hurt before thou camest unto us, and since thou hast come unto us."
>
> *Surah al-A'raf : 129*

Prophet Moses (peace be on him) was ordained to free Bani Israel from the slavery of Pharaoh, rescue them from the contemptible life they were living in Egypt and guide them towards "the way of Allah." But how they repaid him for his immense kindness and unforgetable service.

> "We suffered hurt before thou camest unto us, and since thou hast come unto us."
>
> *Surah al-A'raf : 129*

Bani Israel were not different from the other nations. Other nations to whom the messengers of Allah had been sent had accused them in a similar manner. Surah Yasin records;

> "We augur ill of you."
>
> *Surah Yasin : 18*

It appears that Bani Israel wanted to insinuate : "You have proved inauspicious for us (thousands of our children have been killed because of you). How frustrating and heart-rending it would have been when those people turned out to be so ungrateful and said such harsh words to a person who gave up his life of ease and comfort and staked his life for them ? If they were not inclined to be thankful at least they ought to have kept quiet. But they said, "We suffered hurt before you came amongst us and since you came in our midst. It means that they considered the birth of Prophet Moses (peace be on him) unpropitious because of the sufferings which had continued as before.

**A Preacher is a Preacher under all Conditions :**

What reply did Prophet Moses (peace be on him) gave? This is second example of his stand as a true prophet. He did not take notice of this disheartening remark nor did he lose temper. He behaved in the manner as if he did not hear them say it and what he said instead is a proof of his prophetic dignity and affability. He said :

> "It may be that your Lord is going to destroy your adversary and make you viceroys in the earth, that He may see how ye behave."

*Surah al-A'araf : 129*

The position of a preacher is altogether different from others. He is a preacher under all conditions. It would not be wrong to say that he remains a preacher in all aspects of his life including his personal and domestic life We find the same attitude in the life of Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him). It seems that this ungrate fulness on the part of Bani Israel had no effect on him and he simply conveyed a good news to them. He said, "It is likely that Allah may deal destruction on your enemies and make you vice-regents in their place." He did not stop at that. He also warned them to remain alert so that devil might not mislead them and they might not

commit the same mistakes which they had made earlier, and ended his talk with a note of caution :

> "that He may see how ye behave."

He warned them that like Coptic people they might also lead a luxurious life or like the courtiers of Pharaoh indulge in excesses. Allah will give them a chance:" that He might test which of you excels in good deeds."

> "Lo! the earth is Allah's. He giveth it for an inheritance to whom He will. And lo! the sequel is for those who keep their duty (unto Him)."
>
> *Surah al-A'araf : 128*

> ' And verily We have written in the Scripture, after the Reminder : My righteous slaves will inherit the earth"
>
> *Surah Anbiyah :* 105

It would not be out of place to mention here that the spirit of preaching overwhelms the mind and soul of the preacher and whatever he says and does that spirit radiates from his words and deeds.

**What Prophet Moses Wanted :**

Bani Israel were to undergo another severe trial which was likely to be more painful and distressing. Prophet Moses (peace be on him) led his people in exodus from Egypt to rescue them from the tyranny and oppression of Pharaoh where they were being oppressed on account of their nationality and religion and were living a miserable life. Prophet Moses (peace be on him) thought of the exodus to Sinai Peninsula, a place of peace and freedom-outside Pharaoh's kingdom. Bani Israel had, however different ideas. Whereas Allah had destined that Pharaoh and his army would be drowned in the sea. Prophet Moses (peace be on him) started his journey in the darkness of night. There was only one land route between the Arabian Peninsula and the desert of Africa which connected Africa and Asia and it was in the north-east direction of Egypt.

But Prophet Moses (peace be on him) lost his way. It was, however, not a chance occurrence. It was destined by Allah. He strayed towards the sea-route by losing track of the land route which was shorter. When the morning dawned they saw Red Sea in front and the army of Pharaoh behind them in hot pursuit. Bani Israel cried out : "What will we do now ? They started suspecting Prophet Moses (peace be on him) and said : "You have brought us to a place where we find ourselves in the clutches of Pharaoh. We are between the devil and the deep blue sea." Prophet Moses (peace be on him) again showed his prophetic dignity :

> "And when the two hosts saw each other, those with Moses said : Lo ! we are indeed caught."
>
> *Surah ash-Shu' ara : 61*

What would a political leader say in such a situation ? That we made our plan after careful thought and are working according to it. We are sure we will succeed.

**No, my Allah is with me :**

But what the prophet (peace be on him) who was divinely guided, said to his people :

> "..................... verily : for lo ! my Lord is with me. He will guide me."
>
> *Surah ash-Shu'ara : 62*

He said these words with perfect confidence in Divine Power of Allah. He believed that the night journey was undertaken by the Command of Allah. "He knew that Allah never despairs those who rely on Him and never goes back on His promise." Why should he be then afraid of the sea and the Pharaoh's army ?

It is beyond the Mercy of Allah that He would allow his believers to be an easy prey to their enemies. It is not expected of a just ruler or a loving father or a kind hearted gentleman. The conditions were apparently hazardous but Prophet

Moses (peace be on him) had no doubts about the outcome. He was a prophet and he knew that Bani-Israel has set out at night at the behest of Allah and everything was at His Command and there was nothing to be afraid of. That is why Prophet Moses (peace be on him) said with full confidence :

> "............ My Lord is with me. He will guide me."
>
> *Surah ash-Shu'ara : 62*

We find a similar incidence in the life of Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) which the glorious Qur'an has described as below :

> "............ When they two were in the cave, when he said unto his comrade : Grieve not. Lo ! Allah is with us."
>
> *Surah at-Tauba : 40*

The incident has been mentioned in Sahih Bukhari and all the biographies of Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him). When he and his companion Syedna Abu Bakr were hiding in the cave Thaur and when Sydena Abu Bakr heard the footsteps of Quraish he said, "O Prophet ! if they look down at their feet they can find us." Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) said, "What do you think about those two with whom the third is Allah?"

There is similarity in the utterances of the two great prophets (peace be on them both). They were both prophets (peace be on them both) and they had such unshakable confidence which is still the source of faith, belief and credence for millions of people all over the world. They had the confidence in the Power and Mercy of Allah which was lacked by the great philosophers of their times. No doubt, it is the bestowal of Allah and He confers it on whomsoever He wishes.

**What happened then ?**

The following verses of the glorious Qur'an describe the subsequent events :

> "Then We inspired Moses, saying : Smite the sea with thy staff. And it parted, and each part was as

a mountain vast. Then brought We near the other to that place. And We saved Moses and those with him, every one; We drowned the others. Lo ! herein is indeed a portent, yet most of them are not believers. And lo : thy Lord ! He is indeed the Mighty, the Merciful."

*Surah ash-Shu'ara : 63-68*

SERMON No. 6

# A Believer who concealed His Faith

It would be proper to mention the preachings of Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) after the preachings of prophets Abraham, Joseph and Moses (peace be on all of them). I would like to close this series with the preachings of the final prophet (peace be on him) which is the ultimate object of our study and research and the culminating point of the entire gamut of learning and preaching of the glorious Qur'an.

But I am presenting in this series the examples of the preachings of a believer who was not a prophet. I have already said that if the glorious Qur'an had confined itself to the narration of preachings of the prophets (peace be on all of them) there would be an occasion for the common men to say that they were innocent messengers of Allah (peace be on all of them) who received revelations and were guided (Ibad-ur-Rahman) for the task. We do not stand anywhere in comparison to them and how can we follow their examples in our surroundings. I, therefore thought fit to present the preachings of an ordinary believer who had embraced Islam at the instance of Prophet Moses (peace be on him). He belonged to the family of Pharaoh and whose preaching in the court (of Pharaoh) have thus been described in the glorious Qur'an.

"And Pharaoh said : Suffer me to kill Moses, and let him cry unto his Lord. Lo ! I fear that he will alter

your religion or that he will cause confusion in the land. Moses said : Lo ! I seek refuge in my Lord and your Lord from every scorner who believeth not in a Day of Reckoning. And a believing man of Pharaoh's family, who hid his faith, said : Would ye kill a man because he saith : My Lord is Allah, and hath brought you clear proofs from your Lord ? If he is lying then his lie is upon him; and if he is truthful, then some of that wherewith he threateneth you will strike you. Lo ! Allah guideth not one who is a prodigal, a liar. O my people ! Yours is the kingdom today, ye being upper most in the land. But who would save us from the wrath of Allah should it reach us ? Pharaoh said : I do but show you what I think, and I do but guide you to wise policy. And he who believed said : O my people ! Lo ! I fear for you a fate like that of out the faction (of old); A plight-like that of Noah's folk and A'ad and Thamud, and those after them; and Allah willeth no injustice for (His) slaves, And, O my people : Lo ! I fear for a Day of Summoning, a day when ye will turn to flee, having no preserver from Allah : and he whom Allah sendeth astray, for him there is no guide. And verily Joseph brought you of old clear proofs, yet ye ceased not to be in doubt concerning what he brought you till, when he died, he said : Allah will not send any messenger, after him. Thus Allah deceiveth him who is a prodigal, a doubter. Those who wrangle concerning the revelation of Allah without any warrant that hath come unto them, it is greatly hateful in the sight of Allah and in the sight of those who believe. Thus doth Allah print on every arrogant, disdainful heart."

*Surah al-Mu'min : 26-35*

**A (Well-timed) Debate Full of Wisdom :**

It is the debate which was initiated by a 'believing man'

(who *had* not disclosed his faith). The debate is a fine example of sagacity, eloquence and deep knowledge of human psychology. A debate between a king of the realm and a courtier who believed in Allah. It is, in fact, a treasure of classic literature, elegance and shows the enlightened way of preaching for the connoisseur. We find in it profound knowledge of human psychology and hope and fear in the course of preaching. The verse of the glorious Qur'an advises : "Enter the houses by their doors", points to the same wisdom.

It is the story of a person about whom we do not know anything. We do not know where he was brought up and trained and aquired such intelligence and eloquence which he commanded. But we know that the power of 'iman' is such that it lends speech to the dumb and hearing to the deaf. There have been Mujahid who have fought without a sword.

**The bulwark of the Rulers :**

Pharaoh said :

> "Suffer me to kill Moses, and let him cry unto his Lord. Lo ! I fear that he will alter your religion."
>
> *Surah al-Mu'min* : *26*

It has been a decided policy of the ruling class that they suppress such persons who raise their voice against repression. It is, in fact, their political strategy that they incite hatred against such persons in the people by appealing to their sense of honour and pride. Pharaoh used this ploy cunningly for one is apt to all be concerned with his faith and religion. It has been dear to men in all times whether it was right or wrong, based on revelation or otherwise. Faith is very often dearer to the people than their property and lives and they sacrifice everything to preserve it. That is why Pharaoh said :

> "I fear that he will alter your religion."

Then he added :

> "he will cause confusion in the land."
>
> *Surah al-Mu'min* : 26

Thus he also warned those people who were more patriotic than religious-minded and more sensitive about solidarity and peace in the country. It was because Pharaoh had instigated these patriotic persons against Prophet Moses (peace be on him) by appealing to their patriotism.

Prophet Moses (peace be on him) said :

> "I seek refuge in my Lord and your Lord from every scorner who believeth not in a Day of Reckoning."
>
> *Surah al-Mu'min* : 27

Prophet Moses (peace be on him) did not pay heed to Pharaoh's arrogant utterances. He knew the mind of Pharaoh who had once said :

> "And Pharaoh caused a proclamation to be made among his people saying : O my people ! Is not mine the sovereignty of Egypt and these rivers flowing under me ? Can ye not then discern ?
>
> *Surah al-Zukhruf* : 51

That is why when Pharaoh repeated the same claim in a haughty and arrogant manner, Prophet Moses (peece be on him) ignored it and said :

> "I seek refuge in my Lord and your Lord from every scorner who believeth not in a Day of Reckoning."
>
> *Surah al-Mu'min* : 27

**A Gentle and Persuasive Talk :**

A gentleman who belonged to the family of Pharaoh and had embraced Islam, but had hidden it, got up at this moment and said :

> "Would ye kill a man because he saith : My Lord is Allah."
>
> *Surah al-Mu'min* : 28

It was an appeal but along with it he Invited them to think : "What is his fault, you want to kill him just because he says : My Lord is Allah." But you will not kill a man if he says Pharaoh is my lord. Pharaoh himself had claimad godhead, does he not then deserve to be killed ? O my people ! If an iota of justice has been left in you, just think over it : If a person believed in Allah, Who created him, brought him up, fed him, you will kill him if he says : "My Lord is Allah." On the contrary there is a man who has been created, who is always in need, who is dependent on the Creator for his very breath from the time he was born till this moment, who will be unable to exist without being sustained by him, that man claims godhead and nobody points an accusing finger at him: What sort of justice is this ? The 'believing man' tried to arouse the sense of justice in the courtiers of Pharaoh and to find out whether they had any trace of gentleness and sense of discretion to differentiate between vice and virtue, right and wrong, high and low, the Creator and the created. It was a challenge to all those who were present in the court.

**Facts as the Basis of Argument :**

The 'believing man' strengthened his argument with proofs "(and this man, i.e , Prophet Moses -peace be on him- has brought clear proof from your Lord)" and hinted at the miracles which Prophet Moses (peace be on him) had performed at the behest of Allah.

> "Then he flung down his staff and lo ! it was a serpent manifest; and he drew forth his hand (from his bosom) and lo! it was white for the beholders."
>
> *Surah al- A'raf* : *107-108*

These miracles were such clear proofs which nobody could refute. Because one can argue about anything which concerns the intellect or thinking faculty but there can be on no room for argument about what one sees with his own eyes. The 'believing man' said the very thing which everyone could

understand. He addressed them in a manner they knew well and which was logical and reasonable :

> "If he is lying, then his lie is upon him; and if he is truthful, then some of that wherewith he threateneth you will strike you. Lo ! Allah guideth not one who is a prodigal, a liar."
>
> *Surah al-Mu'min : 28*

In a way he said, 'O my people ! Do not put yourselves in such a difficult position from which it would be hard to get out. This man, (i.e., Prophet Moses) (peace be on him) calls himself a prophet appointed by Allah. If he is true the threat he holds out, will surely come to pass. If he is a liar, then it will cause his doom and you will not, in any way, be responsible for it.

**Immutable way of Allah :**

The third point towards which he drew their attention was the unalterable ways of Allah, which do not change.

> "Yours is the kingdom today, ye being upper-most in the land."
>
> *Surah al-Mu'min : 29*

This way he tried to impress upon the viziers of Pharaoh that "they should not be under any deception for this passing glory. "He said : No doubt, you are in power over a vast country. You are all men of substance and roll in the lap of luxury. You lay down the law, pull the strings of the government, you are well prepared for defence and offence both. But with all that if the chastisement of Allah strikes you, who will save you from it ?" The 'believing man' in fact, invited their attention to the unalterable ways of Allah :

> If he is truthful, then some of that wherewith he threateneth you will strike you..........who will save us from the wrath of Allah should it reach us."
>
> *Surah al-Mu'min : 28-29*

"You think you wield power in your kingdom and you do whatever you please, command anything you like, nobody can stop you from doing what you will. But you forget there is one more Power above you, though you believe in Him, but associate others (as partners) with Him." At this Pharaoh said :

> "I do but show you what I think, and I do but guide you to wise policy."
>
> *Surah al-Mu'min* : *29*

There is no substance in what Pharaoh said (I do show you what I think.) He ought to have produced evidence from revealed Books or adduced some logical argument. But he could not do so and admitted his defeat when he said :" I do but show you what I think", which was without any basis and could be advanced by any dullard or erring man.

**The Examples of Past Nations :**

The 'believing man' cut short Pharaoh's remarks and said :

> "O my people ! Lo ! I fear for you a fate like that of the factions (of old) : A plight like that of Nooh's folk, and, 'Aad, and Thamud, and those after them, and Allah willeth no injustice for (His) slaves."
>
> *Surah al-Mu'min* : *30-31*

It is evident from the above verses that Pharaoh, his viziers and sycophant courtiers knew about the downfall of these nations and those nations which came after them and which were destroyed for their disbelief.

**The Chastisement in the Hereafter :**

Then he said :

> "O my people ! I fear for a Day of Summoning."
>
> *Surah al Mu'min* : *32*

"It means that you should know that kingship has no stability. If it were so the kingdoms of Aad and Thamud would

have continued and not met the doom. When their kingdoms fell, what speciality you have that your kingdom would endure. If there was any difference in moral values between you and those nations and if you had followed the way shown by Prophet Moses (peace be on him) there could be a chance that you would continue to rule in the land for sometime. But you rule with a rod of iron and have the same weaknesses for which the erring nations had been exterminated. I am afraid you would meet the same fate. Where, then, is the line of demarcation between you and those extinct nations." The 'believing man' added :

> "I fear for a Day of Summoning."
>
> *Surah al-Mu 'min* : *32*

The Day of Judgment when the people would call each other, there will be uproar, tumult end utter confusion.

The shouting and clamour were not unknown to Pharaoh and his courtiers. They used to take out processions and there were fairs also. They knew what happens at such times and places. That is why he hinted at the 'Day of Reckoning' and further added :

> "A day when ye will turn to flee."
>
> *Surah al-Mu 'min* : *33*

These words must have been very hard for Pharaoh to bear. Because the worst thing for a ruler is defeat when his army turns its back and runs from the battle-field. Pharaoh had not thought of such a situation. He had a large and well-equipped army. He knew very well the meanings of 'turn to flee' and the disgrace and ignominy faced by the king and the army which is put to rout. That is why the 'believing man' said :

> "A day ye will turn to flee, having no preserver from Allah : and he whom Allah sendeth astray for him there is no guide."
>
> *Surah al-Mu'min* : *33*

## A Sensible Point

Then the 'believing man' who was blessed with wisdom and intelligence raised a very sensible point. He pointed out an age-old weakness of society. "A man does not value the blessings so long as they are available to him." It is in the nature of man that he thinks little what he possesses. He does not value them so long he as can afford them, he disregards them and does not consider them worth-gratifying. He values the past and feels its importance. He grieves over it if it is taken away from him. The people always eulogise the dead person. They extol his virtues one by one. But when he is living in flesh and blood the people would hold him in contempt and treat him as one like them. They would ask what speciality he has. But when he dies poets write elegies and odes about him and he is praised to the skies. It is a malady which keeps many a people away from the great contemporary personalities. The 'believing man' invited their attention to this ungratefulness inherent in human nature.

> "Verily Joseph brought you of old clear proofs, yet ye ceased not to be in doubt concerning what he brought you till, when he died, he said : Allah will not send any messenger after him."
>
> *Surah al-Mu'min* : *34*

Prophet Joseph (peace be on him) was unique in many respects. He was gentle, mercifull aud a just ruler. So long as he lived, people found faults with him, and cast aspersion upon him. It may not be so that you treat Prophet Moses (peace be on him) in the same manner in which Prophet Joseph (peace be on him) was treated by you. When Prophet Moses (peace be on him) would not be amongst you, you would say he was a valuable gift for us. No prophet was like him nor anyone would ever come in future. I warn you against this sort of behaviour. There should be no such mistake again.

**The Vicious Nature of Pharaoh :**

I invite your attention to these words :

"Allah will not send any messenger after him."

It means that they were not prepared to believe that Allah will send any messenger after Prophet Joseph (peace be on him).

> "Thus Allah deceiveth him who is a prodigal, a doubter. Those who wrangle concerning the revelations of Allah without any warrant that hath come unto them, it is greatly hateful in the sight of Allah and in the sight of those who believe. Thus doth Allah print on every arrogant, disdainful heart.'
>
> *Surah al-Mu'min 34-35*

The fact remains that the cause of all frustrations, disappointments and failures to benefit from the bounties of Allah is arrogance. An indefatigable Prophet like Moses (peace be on him) is preaching and those magicians who were called upon to oppose and defeat him provided clear evidence of his prophethood by embracing Islam at his hands. The faith takes them out of Pharaoh's camp and make them join the group of preachers and of those who sacrifice their lives 'in the way of Allah' and attain martyrdom. They became such staunch Muslims as if they were brought up in the lap of a prophet from childhood though their acquaintance with Prophet Moses (peace be on him) was not old. The miracle they had seen had softened their hearts and the seed of 'iman' was ingrained in their hearts. They boldly declared :

> "So decree what thou will decree. Thou wilt end for us only the life of the world"
>
> *Surah : Ta Ha-72*

The 'believing man' tried his best to bring Pharaoh to his senses, but he was adamant. It was this peculiarity of Pharaoh's character which we call arrogance and it has been

mentioned several times in the narration of Prophet Moses (peace be on him) –

> "I seek refuge in my Lord and your Lord from every scorner who believeth not in a Day of Reckoning."
>
> *Surah al-Mu'min* : 27

## A Common Point Between Prophet Moses and Mumin

The 'believing man' again said :

> "Thus Allah deceiveth him who is a prodigal, a doubter. Those who wrangle concerning the revelations of Allah without any warrant that hath come unto them."
>
> *Surah al-Mu'min* : 34-35

The central theme in the whole narration and the key-element in the make-of Pharaoh is arrogance. Prophet Moses (peace be on him) and the 'believing man' know this weakness of Pharaoh and this was the fact known to both of them. They expressed their sorrow over it because it prevented Pharaoh, his viziers and coterie to beneft from their pragmatic and cogent preachings.

## The Weak Point :

The truth about the transient nature of this world and the infinite feature of the world to come (akhirat) has been depicted vividly in the following verses :

> "And he who believed, said : O my peole ! Follow me. I will show you the way of right conduct. .. full verse this life of the world is but a passing comfort, and lo ! the Hereafter, that is the enduring home."
>
> *Surah al-Mu'min* : 38-39

The main stumbling block which stood in Pharaoh's way (to accept truth) was his pride of being the monarch of a vast kingdom. It was, therefore, necessary to point out the transient nature of the world to him. The 'believing man' thus stressed on the weak point of Pharaoh. Then he described

Allah's just and inviolable law of retribution from which nobody can escape.

> "Whoso doth an ill deed. he will be repaid the like thereof, while whoso doth right, whether male or female, and is a believer (all) such will enter the Garden, where they will be nourished without stint."
>
> *Surah al-Mu'min* : 40

**Invitation to differentiate between Profitable and Deceitful :**

Then the 'believing man' presented another aspect : It was the consequence of one's incompetence to differentiate between the useful and harmful, sincerity and insincerity.

> "O my people ! what aileth me that I call you unto deliverance when ye call me unto the Fire ? Ye call me to disbelieve in Allah and ascribe unto Him as partners that whereof I have no knowledge, while I call you unto the Mighty, the Forgiver."
>
> *Surah al-Mu'min* : 41-42

He wanted to impress on his own people to think over what Pharaoh had said and what he was saying : "I show you the way to salvation and invite you to Merciful and Forgiving Allah and Pharaoh invites you to the way where there is death and damnation."

> "Assuredly that whereunto ye call me hath no claim in the world or in the Hereafter, and our return will be unto Allah, and the prodigals will be owners of the Fire."
>
> *Surah al-Mu'min* : 43

The gentle preacher (the 'believing man') warns the courtiers that although Pharaoh's claim had no substance it was being thrust upon them. In fact, all the preachings which are not backed by revelation are meaningless and without purpose. They have nothing to do with the knowledge and

certitude. They are far-fecthed and away from the teachings of true prophets (peace be on all of them). They spring up like mushroom or weeds which the gardeners and farmers root out and throw away. The preacher called their attention to the fact that Pharaoh and his entourage were calling the people to something without any susbtance either in this world or the next which was illusory and consisted merely of their whims and desires.

**The Last Warning Which Every Preacher Gives :**

In the end the 'believing man' movingly poured out his heart and left everything to Allah. It was a call from the depth of his heart and the last attempt so that wise counsel may prevail with them. It was a warning which every well-wisher and preacher gives in the end when all arguments and pleadings fail. It was the last word for he said nothing after that :

> "And ye will remembet what I say unto you. I confide my cause unto Allah, Lo ! Allah is Seer of (His) slaves."
>
> *Surah al-Mu'min* : *44*

It is the best way of concluding any sermon for every preachar ends his preachings with these words where his listeners are disinclined to take his advice.

This debate has no parallel in its method and the glorious Qur'an has made it immortal by its eloquent and inimitable description. It is unmatched in its natural and logical order because the mind moves from one aspect to another. It is unparalleled from the beginning to the end. It serves as a beacon in our preachings and if any despotic power stands in our way, we can discharge our responsibility in the light of this debate.

It is a fine example of preaching based on the teachings of the prophets (peace be on all of them) : It is an admonition when a preacher takes recourse as the last resort. It

is the example of a preacher who was not a prophet nor he occupied any important positions among the companions of Prophet Moses (peace be on him). The glorious Qur'an has mentioned him as a 'believing man of Pharaoh's family' who hid his faith. We can learn a lot from it and deduce many valuable principle for our guidance in preaching from it.

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SERMON No. 7

# Two Examples of Prudence and Preachings of The Final Prophet of Islam

**(peace be on him)**

## 1) The Sermon on Mount Safa :

Each and every act of the sublime and brilliant missionary life of the final prophet of Islam (peace be on him) is a miracle. I begin with the first event in the chain of such events in his pious life (when he commenced his public preaching from Mount Safa). I want you to bear in mind the environment and the difficulties which came in his way when he initiated his mission as a Messenger of Allah, preacher, harbinger of glad tidings and a warner. The 'call' was to believe in Allah, and the Oneness of Allah, to give up polytheism, idol-worship and the life (which was devoid of prophetic guidance.) I want you to bring before your mind's eye the circumstances in which the holy prophet (peace be on him) started to give a practical shape to his mission.

## A Prophet is a 'bridge' between the Seen and the Unseen words :

Whatever Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) wanted to say to Quraish Arabs, his contemporaries and the entire mankind was basically based on two concepts. The first is that the world in which we live, see and feel is not the be-all and end-all of life. There is also another invisible world

which we do not perceive. It is beyond the perceivable consciousness of man. The other point on which his preachings were based was to remind mankind about the belief in prophethood. The prophet is a medium or sort of a 'bridge' through which we can create a link between this world and the next (which is concealed from our view and lies outside the material phenomena). There is no other way through which man in this world can acquaint himself with the coming world as all the means at our disposal are limited and ineffectual. Intellect is bound by the five senses granted to man and the invisible world is beyond his perceptions.

## When does Reason begins to work ?

Intellect depends on the perceptions by sense organs. It draws its conclusions from the information supplied by them. Intellect is a faculty which infers from the perceptions received by man. It would be unavailing where perceptions fail to supply any information because human reason has nothing to fall back upon except these impressions. It is a reality of which the intellectualists are generally not aware. They think that intellect is something self-sufficient, i.e., it functions of its own without assistance from outside faculties. The modern philosophy has, however established that intellect is useless without the help of the five senses and it cannot exist independent of them.

## The Remoteness of Arabs from Prophetic Teachings

The trouble was that the Arabs in general and the people of Makkah in particular, were unacquainted with prophetic teachings. They had no occasion to receive such teachings for a very long time and had no idea of the Unseen world for many generations. The prophetic link which acts as a bridge in between the present world and the next was not there for many centuries. The glorious Qur'an has described it in its miraculous way.

> "That thou mayst warn a folk whose fathers were not warned, so they are heedless."
>
> *Surah Yasin : 6*

The same theme has been repeated at other places :

> "but doth their knowledge reach to the Hereafter? Nay, for they are in doubt concerning it. Nay, for they cannot see."
>
> *Surah Naml : 66*

3) "but they denied that, the knowledge whereof they could not compass, and whereof the interpretation (in events) hath not yet come unto them."

*Surah Yunus : 39*

**Prophet Muhammad Addressed these Ignoramuses. (People who did not know the ABC of Religion )**

The most difficult problem was that Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) was enjoined to invite such people to Truth (Haqq) who did not know the rudiments of or had any idea about religion. They were simply incapable of understanding religious truths.

For example, take the case of a real great philosopher, a scholar or a genius. If he does not know Arabic and you place an Arabic newspaper in his hands and ask him to read and explain the contents in a day or two, and if he has no guide, he will be unable to do it simply because he does not know that language. The same is true of perceptions which are like alphabets for human reasoning.

Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) had to address a people who did not know even the ABC of religion. The environment in which they had been born and brought up was devoid of any schooling and was not receptive to prophetic teachings, indeed, any teachings. It was, first of all, necessary for them to have a clear conception of prophethood so that

Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) could take the next step of conveying prophetic teachings to them.

## The Prophets Draw Far-reaching Conclusions from Ordinary Events

The Arabs of Makkah were not acquainted with religious terminology also for a long time. But they had a keen insight and had the good quality of realism, a lot of commonsense and a keen observation. Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) had these qualities of the Arabs in view when he decided to tell them about prophethood and the elevated position of the prophet. He wanted to prove that he stood at a place from where he could forewarn about the imperceptible reality and the dangers that lay ahead of them. His method of instruction was better than scores of arguments. It was the method which the great speakers and scholars perfect in spirit had utilised earlier. The various phases through which the Prophet (peace be on him) passed, the ways and means which he employed and the methods he adopted in discharging the onerous duties of prophethood were in accord with the nature of Arabs, the prevailing conditions and the principles used by all the earlier prophets (peace be on all of them). The prophets (peace be on all of them) do not turn to ornate language, useless metaphors and philosophical jargons in their discourses. They, however, draw far-eaching conclusions from common incidents of every day occurrence.

## Prophet Muhammad was Arab and Knew Their Mind

During the life time of Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) there was no such media as newspapers, loud speakers, radios, etc. Then what could be the method of collecting some people so that they may leave their work-in-hand and collect at a place in order that something could be told to them ? Because the Prophet (peace be on him) was himself an Arab, he knew their customs, social habits, national traditions and

psychology. He utilised the traditional method to propagate the true religion. There in no other admirable and virtuous more work than this.

It was the custom with the Arabs that if anybody came to know of any on-coming danger or apprehended a sudden enemy attack of which others were not aware, he would climb over a mountain or a hillock and cry out :

**Ya Sabahah ! Ya Sabahah !**

The people would give up their occupations at once and rush to hear him.

The question is what could have been the danger for which they had to give up their business-in-hand and collect at one place and what was it that kept them on tenterhooks. The fact is that they knew of just one danger and it was the raid by gang of robbers. If successful, the raiders used to kill many people, plunder and carry their camels and other animals.

## The Inner Enemy is Worse than Outer One :

The damages inflicted by the external enemy, however severe, do not carry much weight with the prophets (peace be on them all), because they know that the greatest danger and cause of disaster is the ignorance of man about his Creator. The greatest danger with them is the life devoid of prophetic teachings and the vices that crop up owing to ignorance of these teachings. Hazrat Jafar bin Abi Talib recounted in the court of King Negus, "we Arabs used to worship idols, devour carrion, commit sins, break-off blood relations, tyrannise our neighbours and the high and mighty used to oppress the low and the weak."

The enemy which had infiltrated into their lives in the form of beliefs and usages was more dangerous than any external enemy according to Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him). This danger which springs from their inner self was

more harmful than that which they used to experience in their lives. It was a part of Arab tribal society of the pagan past. The enmity of ther inner-self was not less troublesome and grave than the enmity of any adversary. The life they were leading was sure to invite the wrath of Allah who does not like this bondmen to live in infidelity and create disorder in the world.

**Right Call at the Right Time**

Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) went up the Mount Safa which was close to the dwellings of Quraish and called out :

**Ya Sabahah ! Ya Sabahah !**

It was a correctcall given at the most proper time. The persons who would give such a call used to be important and sober (unlike those at present). Nobody would dare to give such a call for any fictitious or unimportant matter. This time the people of Makkah had heard a person who was well-known and everyone used to call him the "truthful" and "trust-worthy." His entire life was before them. No person more true and sincere than Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) had ever existed in that valley. That is why it has been mentioned in his biographies that there was nobody in Makkah who did not respond to his call and even those who could not come in person (for some reason) sent their representatives.

**The Arabs were Just and Brave**

When the people of Makkah had collected, Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) said, "O Ye sons of Abdul Muttalib ! O Ye eccions of Ka'ab :] will you believe me if I were to tell you that there is an army at the other side of the hill likely to attack you.?"

The people who were addressed were illiterate, they knew no logic and philosophy but as I have already said, they were sincere and practical people. They had a lot of common-

sense which is a great boon for any people. When the Prophet (peace be on him) addressed them, they quickly surveyed the surroundings and saw that he was standing on top of the hill. He could see the side of the hill while it was hidden from their view. They readily accepted that he could see the other side which was hidden from them.

It was a fact which nobody could deny. By the same token it does not behove educated and intelligent persons to refute what the prophets (peace be on all of them) perceive since they do not share those perceptions the prophets have. The man who is standing at the foot of the hill cannot deny what a person standing on top of the hill sees on the other side of the hill.

### Unyielding Obstinacy of the Philosophers :

When any quibbler used to arguewith the prophets (peace be on all of them ) they used to exclaim :

> "........ ..........Dispute ye with me concerning Allah when He hath guided me ?"
>
> *Surah al-An'am* : 80

But the illiterate Arabs were men endowed with practical wisdom and had knowledge of the world. They were not like those philosophers and intellectuals who used to challenge the cognition of the prophets (peace be on all of them) and usedto be suspicious about those truths which were outside their knowledge and observation :

> "..................but they denied that the knowledge whereof the interpretation ( in events ) hath not yet come unto them."
>
> *Surah Yunus* : 39

### The Real Problem is about Belief in the Unseen

When the first phase was over then he advised them about the other.

"I warn you of the coming chastisement."

The people could ask when and where did he see that chastisement ? But the person standing on top of the hill could see what those at the foot of the hill could not. The Arabs had native wit and they were fair-minded and brave by nature. They took no time in surveying the whole scene and readily testified that "if you say, there is an army on the othrer side and ready to attack, it is possible."

## The Prophets Stand On The 'Mount' of Prophethood

Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) explained in clear terms the high office of prophethood through the wisdom and eloquence which Allah had bestowed on him. The position of prophets (peace be on all of them) is unique and incomparable. The Prophet (peace be on him) sees what his contemporaries also see because he too is a man.

> "Say : I am only a mortal like you. My Lord inspireth in me."
>
> *Surah Kahf* : *110*

But he 'sees' the unseen world also which is hidden from others. They, however,do not see the entire unseen world and are aware of as much as Allah wills to reveal to them.

> "(He is) the Knower of the unseen and He revealeth unto none His secrets, save unto every messenger whom He hath chosen."
>
> *Surah Jinn : 26-27*

The reason is that the prophets (peace be on all of them) are blessed with qualities which no other man can share with them. Nobody, however, intelligent and scholarly he may be, cannot deny the observations of the prophets (peace be on all of them) because they are able to see what no other man can see.

In fact. the whole problem boils down to just one thing : Belief in an Unseen world. If, however, a world which is hidden from our sight is accepted, then it will open the way

for the possibility of existence of hundred and one other worlds. The prophets (peace be on all of them) demand that one may believe in a world which is beyond the ken of human perception. When one accepts this as a reality and testifies to such a world which is not perceivable by him then he can believe in a thousand other realities.

**The Real Danger which the People of Makkah had Forgotten :**

"I warn you of the coming chastisement."

The Prophet (peace be on him) warned of the danger which was real and eternal and was the result of the irreligious life which they were leading—the idol worship to which they were sticking and the immoral life they were leading through ignorance. In short the darkened life of ignorance which they were living—a life devoid of the light of true faith, knowledge, justice and piety—a life full of disorder and without peace of mind which corrodes the vital powers of man.

> "Corruption doth appear on land and sea because of (the evil) which men's hands have done, that He may make them taste a part of that which they have done, in order that they may return."
>
> *Surah ar-Rum* : *41*

> "And verily We make them taste the lower punishment before the greater, that haply they may return."
>
> *Suarh as Sajdah* : *21*

**Beliefs and Morals are the Themes of the Prophets :**

Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) did not interfere with their economic, administrative or political life, because these are not the objects of the prophets (peace be on all of them) nor are these subjects of discussion in the revealed books, What Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) had in view was eternal chastisement which is bound to befall the wrong doers in the next world. The misfortune or calamities in this world are nothing compared to that :

(1) "————verily the doom of the Hereafter is more painful.

*Surah ar-R'ad : 34*

(2) "———— —verily the doom of the Hereafter will be sterner and more lasting.

*Surah Ta Ha : 127*

(3) "————verily the doom of the Hereafter will be more shameful."

*Surah Ha Mim as-Sajdah : 16*

**The ways of the Prophets are Different.**

The experts and research scholars have discovered the properties of medicinal plants and their effects. They have found out many secrets of the universe and accumulated a treasure of knowledge which has benefited mankind. Their services are worthy of admiration.

But the speciality of the prophets (peace be on all of them) and the object of their preaching is to imart the knowledge of One and Only Allah and His Attributes, the Divine Pleasure and Displeasure. Secrets of beliefs and ( righteous ) deeds, to differentiate between good and bad, right and wrong, lawful and unlawful, the helpful and the harmful. They preach and practice (virtuous) deeds which bring success and prosperity and warn against those (mis) deeds which cause distress and deprivation. They also warn about the reward or punishment here in this world and in the Hereafter. Allah also discloses cosmic realities to the prophets (peace be on all of them) to the extent He Wills and the ultimate destiny of mankind in the coming world (accor-ding to their deeds in this world).

"He is the Knower of the Unseen. and He revealeth unto none His secret, save unto every messenger whom He hath chosen."

*Surah Jinn : 26-27*

## The Final Warning of the Prophets :

The prophets (peace be on all of them) who stand on the peak of prophethood and see 'things' as far as Allah Wills, warn mankind of what the immediate and distant future holds for it and where the lurking dangers lie for it. They expound everything with sincerity, affection and kindnesss. If some ignoramus argues against or doubts their prophetic teachings which are based on commonsense and intelligence they simply tell them :

> "—— ——— I exhort you unto one thing only : that ye awake, for Allah's sake, by two and singly, and then reflect. There is no madness in your comrade. He is naught else but a warner unto you in face of a terrific doom."
>
> *Surah Saba : 46*

The 'believing man' who belonged to the family of Pharaoh had said the same thing to his fellow men :

> "And ye will remember what I say unto you : I confide my cause unto Allah, Lo ! Allah is Seer of (His) slaves."
>
> *Surah al-Mu'min : 44*

## A Unique Example of Prophetic Wisdom :

I present another illuminating and unique example (of oration) which is different in its method and manner on account of the special reasons and peculiar circumstances (in which it was delivered). It is unparallaled so far as prophetic wisdom and classic genre (of sermonizing) are concerned. Its classicism is not, however, confined to beauty of expression but it is worth studying for its thought content and sound judment (of human psychology). It is also a fine example of enlightened leadership and winsome style. It thus provides a good subject for research and debate for scholars partircularly researchers in psychology.

When Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) returned from the battle of Hunayn and camped at J'irrana he distributed the spoils of war about which you might have read in Prophet's (peace be on him) biographies and treatises on Islamic history. He gave larger share to Quraish chiefs who had recently embraced Islam because it had psychological expediencies-Abu Sufyan and Ikrama received larger share than others. Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) had relied on the firm faith and sincerity of his earlier companions (Ansar). He was well aware that their fidelity with Islam and love for him had stood the test of time. That is why he did not consider it worth-while to give them an equal share with those who had embraced Islam recently.

But some youngmen from 'Ansar' felt aggrieved and expressed dissatisfaction that the Prophet (peace be on him) had given a larger share to his own kin. The news reached him and he did not ignore those grumblings of the immature youngsters. Because he was not only a Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) but a counsellor, mentor and a well-wisher. He asked the 'Ansar' to assemble in the courtyard of a house. When they had collected, he said :

"What are these grumblings which have come to my notice ? You are complaining (about the distribution of the spoils of war)." The 'Ansar' felt ashamed and said, there is nothing, O Prophet ! (peac be on him). "There are some immature youngmen The Satan has seduced them and created doubts in their minds " Then the Prophet (peace be on him) said, "Is it not a fact that when I came to you, you were misguided, Allah guided you through me; you were poor and unhappy; Allah made you prosperous and happy through me; you were enemies to one another, Allah united you through me and created love amongst you." The 'Ansar' said, "it is true and we are grateful to Allah and the Prophet (peace be on him) for this kindness and benevolence."

The Prophet (peace be on him) did not prolong his speech, but himself expressed what might have crossed the minds of certain persons. He said, "Why do not you say anything." The 'Ansar' said "What can we say ? We are grateful to Allah and the Prophet (peace be on him) from the depth of our hearts." The Prophet (peace be on him) said; if you say so, and so I will vouch for it. But you can say that you came to us when everybody had denied you and we believed in you; you came to us when everybody had forsaken you and we came to your help; you came to us when the people of Makkah had turned you out and we provided shelter to you, when you came to us you were empty-handed and we served you in every way."

Can there be any leader, benefactor of any community or well-wisher of a family, say all these things against himsel? If this dialogue was not found in his biographies and Imam Bukhari had not confirmed it, nobody would have dared repeat these words :

"The people denied you; we vouched for you;
The people deserted you; we helped you,
The people turned you out; we sheltered you."

**You are Unhappy with Me over Worthless Chattels :**

When the Prophet (peace be on him) touched their sympathetic chord tears rolled down their cheeks. The Prophet (peace be on him) further added :

"O ye Ansar : you have a grudge against me for these worthless chattels. I wanted to reconcile the hearts of the newly converts so that they may become true Muslims and as for you, I thought, the bounty of Islam is good enough for you."

The Prophet (peace be on him) infused a new life and a new spirit about Islam and his own self among the 'Ansar'. The result was that a strong wave of love surged in their

hearts and washed away the scum (if there was any). The Prophet (peace be on him) then said such words that would cause rocks to split and springs of water to gush forth from them.

"O ye Ansars ! would you not like that other people carry camels and goats with them and you carry the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) with you. By Allah ! if there had been no migration, I would have been one of the Ansar. If people take to a valley, I would go to the valley where 'Ansar' would go. 'Ansars'are like under clothes to me and others are like outer garments to me.

"O Allah ! Be kind to 'Ansar', their descendants and successors. "What happened then ? It had the desired effect. The Ansars wept and with tears in their eyes, said :

"We are happy that the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) be with us. We are contented with our lot."

**The Best Example of Literary Artistry :**

You may look into any language, or history of religions, you will not find a more eloquent mode of persuasion, a deeper knowledge of human psychology employed with wisdom for the ailing hearts of the people.

These are a few examples of the art of preaching with prudence which are not to be found in any other literature. They are simply immortal.

———

SERMON No. 8

# Syedna Ja'far bin Abi Talib as an Emissary

I have presented the excellent examples of preaching of the three indefatigable Prophets Abraham, Joseph and Moses (peace be on all of them) and reproduced the dialogues between them and their peoples (who accepted their 'call' and who did not). I have reproduced the dialogue of a 'believing man' who was not a prophet but a contemporary of Prophet Moses (peace be on him) whose bosom had been opened by Allah, who hathe wisdom and 'iman' and had the ability and skill to speak on a delicate subject like preaching. He delivered an eloquent sermon in a way that it appeared to have been prepared in advance. It had food for thought besides being sober. He did not babble off hand of which he would be ashamed and feel apologetic later. Whomsoever Allah choses for this high and pious mission he developes these qualities and whoever takes up the this task and his object is to persuade in an indisputable manner he gets divine help.

I have presented two illuminating examples of preaching by the final Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) in this discourse. It is well nigh impossible to pen all the miraculous examples of preaching by Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him). The deeper one delves the more precious pearls of wisdom one finds and there is never any end to it. Today we turn to another subject which is about the preaching of one of

the believers who were brought up under the tutelage of and had their training from Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him). Their number runs into thousands. I present the preaching of only one of them. Syedna Ja'far bin Abi Talib was a cousin of the Prophet (peace be on him). He was same person about whom the Prophet (peace be on him) had said :

> "Ja'far, you are very much like me in appearance and disposition."

## Muslims Migrate to Abyssinia :

The Apostle saw his followers standing their ground in spite of persecutions, and his heart was laden with grief. And since he could do nothing to protect them, he advised them to migrate to the country of the Christian ruler Negus of Abyssinia, who was known to be just and kind hearted. It was a friendly country, said the Apostle, wherethe Muslims could remain until such time as Allah relieved them of their distress,

Thereupon ten Muslims left Makkah for Abyssinia. This was the first migration in Islam. Uthman b. M'azun was elected as the leader of this first batch of emigrants. After them Syedna J'afar b. Abi Talib departed from Makkah, then a number of Muslims withdrew, one after another; some went alone, others took their families with them. A total of eighty-three persons are reported to have migrated to Abyssinia.[1]

## Quraish Pursue the Muslims :

The news that the Muslims were living in peace in Abyssinia reached Makkah and the faces of the Quraishites were clouded over. They decided lo send 'Abdullah b. Abu Rabi'a and 'Amr b. al 'As b. Wa'il as their emissaries, laden with the choicest presents of Makkah for king Negus, his no-

1. Ibn Hisam, Vol. 1, pp. 320-21

bles and chiefs to get the exiles back from Abyssinia. The agents of the Quraish first bribed the courtiers of king Negus with their presents to espouse rheir cause before the King. Then thay took their presents to king Negus and said :

> "Some foolish youngmen of our people have taken refuge in Your Majesty's country. They have abandoned their own religion and have not accepted yours, but invented a new faith of which we know not anything nor do you. Our nobles (who are their elders and guardians) have sent us to Your Majesty so as to get the exiles back from you, for they are nearcr to them and know their faults."

The courtiers of King Negus who had his ears came out with one voice, "They are correct, surrender the refugees to them." But King Negus was enraged, he disliked to forsake those who had sought his shelter. He said, "No, By God, I will not surrender them." Thereafter he summoned the Muslims to his court where his bishops were present, and asked the Muslims," What is that religion for which you have forsaken your people, and neither accepted my religion nor any other ?"

**SYedna J'afar's Portrayal of Ignorance and Islam :**

J'afar b. Abi Talib, the cousin of the Prophet (peace be on him) then rose to explain what the King had asked. He said :

> "O king ! we were an unenlightened people plunged in ignorance. We worshipped idols, we ate deadanimals, and we committed abominations; we broke natural ties, we ill-treated our neighbours and our strong tyranised the weak. We thus lived until Allah raised among us an Apostle, of whose noble birth and lineage truthflness, honesty and purity we were aware. He invited us to acknowledge the Oneness of Allah and to worship Him, and to renounce the stones and

idols we and our forefathers used to venerate. He enjoined us to speak the truth, to redeem our pledges, to be kind and considerate to our kins and neighbours; he asked us to refrain from every vice, bloodshed, shamelessness, lies and deceit; and asked us not to encroach upon the substance of orphans nor to vilify chaste women. He commanded us to pay divine honours to Allah alone and never associate aught with Him; he ordered us to offer prayers, to pay the poor-due, to observe fast (thus enumerating other injunctions of Islam). We acknowledged his truth and believed in him, we followed him in whatever he brought from Allah, and we worshipped one and Only Allah without associating aught with Him. We treated as unlawful what he forbade and accepted what he made lawful for us. Thereon our people were estranged; they persecuted us, tried to seduce us from our faith and forced us to take the idols back for our God, and they pressed us to return to the abominations we used to commit earlier."

"So when they tortured us and grinded us under their tyranny and stood between us and our religion, we migrated to your country having chosen you above others for taking refuge. We have come here, O King, to your country seeking your protection and we do hope that we shall not be dealt with unjustly."

King Negus listened patiently to Syedna J'afar b. Abi Talib. Then he asked Syenda J'afar if he had something brought by his Prophet (peace be on him) from God.

Syedna J'afar replied in the affirmative. King Negus asked him to recite the same. Thereupon Syedna J'afar recited the opening verses of the Surah Maryam.[1] King Negus wept

1. 19th Chapter, "Mary"

until his beard was wet; the bishop wept until their scrolls were wet with their tears.

**Discomfiture of the Quraishite Emissaries :**

"Of a truth, this and what Jesus brought are radiations from the same heavenly light", said King Negus. Then turning to the envoys of the Quraish he continued, "You may go, By God, I shall never give them up to you."

Now, the shrewd poet 'Amr b al-'As flung his last shot-and a deadly shot, too-for he said, "O King, they assert a dreadful thing about Jesus which is even unwhole some to repeat before thee."

King Negus demanded from Hazrat J'afar, "What do you say about Jesus ?"

Syedna J'afar b. Abi Talib replied, We say about him that which our Prophet (peace be on him) has taught us. He was a creature of Allah and His Prophet, and His Spirit, and His Word, which was cast unto the blessed Virgin Maryam."

King Negus took a straw from the ground and said, "By God, Jesus, son of Mary, does not exceed what you have said by the length of this straw."

King Negus treated the Muslims with honour and pledged his protection to them. Both the crestfallen envoys of the Quraish had to leave Abyssinia in great shame while the Muslims lived there in peace and security.[1]

**Discomfiture of Quraishite Emissaries :**

If there were any other person besides Syedna J'afar bin Abi Talib and he would be confronted with such au unforseen situation, he would, no doubt, resort to subterfuge and politicize his answer in a manner that the humanity of Prophet Christ (peace be on him) would become doubtful.[2]

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1. Ibn Hisham, pp. 333-38
2. Psilanthropism : Doctrine that Christ was a mere man.

Syedna J'afar was known for his eloquence, excellence and ready-wit. He was an extraordinary spokesman of Islam though he was not a prophet. But he was representing the Prophet (peace be on him) in the court of a king. It was, therefore, impossible for him to confuse truth with untruth. That is why whatever he said, it was plain, intelligible and indisputable and presented with skill, sagacity and judiciousness in a balanced manner.

## Victory in an Intellectual Contest :

The result of this probity and sincerity, eloquence and elegance was that Syedna J'afar emerged with flying colours through this unprecedented trial. The two emissaries of Quraish returned discomfited. It is reported that King Negus sent back the Muslims (from his court) with respect and honour and they lived there in peace under his benign rule.

I conclude these analects of classic literature and illuminating specimen of skill in preachings with this episode which took place in terrifying circumstances, the credit of which goes to a relation and companion of Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) who was skilful and forthright in his speech.

These are the unfailing guides of "wisdom and fair exhortation" for preachers and worth studying by lovers of knowledge and literature.

The End